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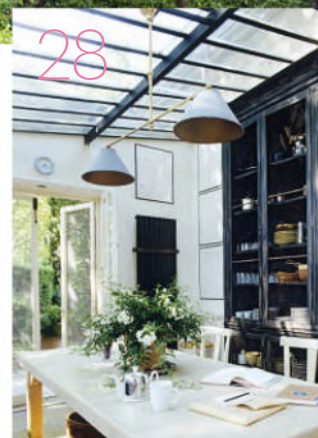
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TO RENEW OR TAKE OUT A SUBSCRIPTION TO CL THIS MONTH
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FIRST WORDS FROM THE EDITOR



A garden room...

...is such a treat – a place to potter with plants, keep dry when it rains and revel in good light all year round has huge appeal. A halfway house between inside and out, such a space feels leafy and green but can just as easily be kitted out with comfortable soft furnishings as it can with practical work-a-day pieces. My personal preference is for a good-sized surface that can act as the perfect potting bench but transform into a lunch table for get-togethers with friends. To find out more about extending your living space with anything from a basic lean-to to a full-on conservatory, turn to page 28 for our feature *Rooms with a View* – and these flower bottles with seasonal blooms (below) from our Country Living General Store will add a charming decorative touch*. In this issue, we also have easy-to-prepare summer dishes (page 134), which will be ideal for eating in your garden room or even alfresco. If it's warm enough – and dark enough – lie back and look up at the stars. In town, it's often hard to see much but in the countryside, where light pollution is not such a problem, you might just see a shooting star. See page 42 for stargazing tips. Enjoy your summer!

Dory Smith



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relax in the country



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Invite a little rustic charm into your life with the Country Living collection, a handcrafted range that includes the Loch Leven featured here. Every sofa is painstakingly handmade to order with the very best British design and craftsmanship, using the finest materials. To find the nearest store that stocks the range visit dfs.co.uk/countryliving

emporium

From a country picnic to a trip to the beach, make the most of summer with these stylish accessories

This compact clay feeder* is perfect for smaller birds and is available in six colours, including grey, blue and white (shown), £26, Green&Blue

Create your own paper bunting with this kit containing flags and four metres of string, £7.95, The Original Pop Up Shop

A bold floral cotton-linen twill cushion will add colour to an outdoor celebration, £95, Amara

The printed cotton band on this Fedora hat is designed by Julie Dodsworth and is from her British Waterways collection for Barbour, £39.95

Suitable for indoor and outdoor use, this hand-crafted Loop bench is made from sustainably sourced English oak, £2,995, Tom Raffield

Handmade basket tray (47cm x 44cm), £25, Heal's

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NOTES

Hand-sewn fabric bird, from a selection of one-off life-size designs, from £395, Emily Sutton

Notebook with a hedgerow illustrated cover, £4.95

for two, A Farmer's Daughter at Country Living General Store

COMPILED BY ALAINA BINKS *FOOD BALL NOT INCLUDED
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in your garden with this
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beaker in
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signature leaf
pattern,
available in
yellow, green,
blue and pink, £4
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Thornback & Peel's new Cow and Buttercup print features on a range of kitchen linens. Tea towel, £12.95



Pack a blanket, flask and treats in this
coppiced oak and hazel basket by weaver
Lorna Singleton, £120, The New Craftsmen



Candles created by hand-
pouring beeswax into
antique bottles and jars,
from £20, Pollen Arts at
Tanner & Lawson



This Liberty-print tent is UV fade-resistant,
waterproof and fire retardant. £595, Liberty



Stylish maple-wood
salad servers for dining
alfresco, £4 (pair), RE





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Take this roll-up reversible acrylic woven mat to the beach, £15, Cath Kidston



Canvas bag
by Margate-
based
designer
Alex Foster,
£20,
Doodle Bag



Striking Fairtrade Shibori throws
hand-made using traditional
Japanese techniques,
£70 each, Decorator's
Notebook



Coast features birds, plants and marine life, £35 unframed

Bold & Noble's new range of three prints titled The British



Boat sculpture made
from hand-printed
tin, £400, John
Grayson at Studio
Fusion Gallery



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Folding seat with a classic
striped canvas sling over a
sturdy beech frame, £45,
Garden Trading at Country
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i For stockist details, see *Where to Buy*

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A bright, white interior space, likely a sunroom or a small office. The walls and ceiling are white with vertical and horizontal wooden slats. A white desk with a wooden top holds a blue typewriter, a stack of papers, and a small wooden box. A green wooden chair with a dark green seat cushion is positioned in front of the desk. A white cloth is draped over the back of the chair. To the right, a window with white frames is partially covered by white curtains. On a shelf above the window, there is a potted plant with white flowers and a glass jar. The floor is made of light-colored wooden planks.

WHITE, BRIGHT & beautiful

An all-white palette is an ideal way to freshen up your home – discover simple but stylish ideas to bring interest and individuality to every room

PRODUCED BY ATLANTA BARTLETT AND DAVE COOTE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY POLLY WREFORD



Calming, uplifting and easy to live with, white is a wonderful choice to lighten and brighten a space. Whether you want to create a traditional look or a modern rustic feel, the secret is to use a mix of different shades and tones – chalky off-whites alongside alabaster, lime and bleached pebble, for example – to bring subtle but stylish detail to a room. It's also important to introduce plenty of texture to give a pale palette extra depth, using pieces of distressed wooden furniture and woven materials. A natural light-reflector, white will help to increase the feeling of space – painting a ceiling and cornice a couple of shades lighter than the walls will

instantly add an impression of height. Collections of favourite objects and artwork look beautiful against a pale background, too, and are given more focus, while accents of bolder colours and strong patterns will have extra impact. Extending your choice of white to china, accessories and fabrics will further strengthen the effect.

Use white with shades of grey for a decidedly contemporary feel. Picking out door frames and panelling in the darker tone will give important definition to a space, and a white background makes the ideal blank canvas for furniture and accessories in slate, stone, steel or charcoal hues. Take further inspiration from these ideas... ➔

OPPOSITE Whites and greys are a good choice for giving a new lease of life to dark furniture, such as this old wooden table, which now serves as a desk **THIS PAGE** A plain white backdrop emphasises the shape and beauty of a variety of natural finds



STYLISH SHADES

The *Country Living* Paint Collection from Marston & Langinger includes soft greys and off-whites that offer great coverage with minimal preparation. All are available as tester pots (£15 for three) or from £25/litre in three finishes – chalky interior matt emulsion, interior eggshell and exterior eggshell – at shop.countryliving.co.uk.

Use a few
colourful or
brightly
patterned
accessories
– or distinctive
pieces in
contrasting
darker hues
– to provide
definition and
stylish accents
in an entirely
white scheme



OPPOSITE A limited amount of pattern, as on these pretty vintage floral cushions, has more impact against a pure-white palette **THIS PAGE, ABOVE** An edited display of kitchen accessories, including metal teapots, adds subtle interest to an all-white kitchen, with an industrial table and stools providing darker accents **FAR LEFT** A mix of finishes brings understated detail to a pale scheme **LEFT** Shiny white appliances sing out against a white setting in matt tones ➔



LIGHTEN A FLOOR

Washing wooden boards with lye and white soap is a traditional treatment in Scandinavia. The effect is soft and chalky, but the finish is extremely durable. Apply the lye (wear protective gloves and goggles) to freshly sanded pine

boards, brushing in the direction of the grain. Once dry, apply three coats of high-resolution white floor soap to seal. Two coats can be used for a lighter finish. Always double-check the manufacturer's instructions, as these can vary.*



Shades of grey
and white
create an
elegant and
interesting
combination
with a
distinctly
Gustavian feel



ABOVE LEFT White paintwork accentuates the architectural lines of beams and rafters in this beach house. Simple muslin curtains around the bed add to the ethereal mood
ABOVE RIGHT The door frame and panelling below dado level in this hall have been painted a darker grey to striking effect
LEFT Distressed furniture in soft greys brings gentle texture to a white scheme ➔

*FIND A SELECTION OF LYES, SOAPS AND OILS AT EVAJOHNSON.COM

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THIS PAGE A
polished concrete
floor is both beautiful
and robust. The sheen
of the surface will
complement a palette
of chalky white

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ROOMS WITH A VIEW

An additional living space, a link to the great outdoors or a heavenly hideaway, a conservatory will fill your home with natural light whether you choose an elegant metal structure or more rustic wooden style

WORDS BY CAROLINE ATKINS • PRODUCED BY ALAINA BINKS

h owever you plan to use it, the joy of a conservatory is its large-windowed, light-enhancing structure, giving your house extra space and creating better views of the garden. Designs range from the classic gable-ended Georgian style and the multi-sided, crested-roof Victorian form to the oak-framed garden rooms and the contemporary glass construction. It doesn't have to match the period of the original building, but it's important to make sure the shape (particularly the roof line) is sympathetic to the look of your house.

If your house already has a dilapidated conservatory, look for a company that will restore or recreate it, preserving authentic fittings where possible, along with established planting such as spreading vines. If you're adding a new structure, aluminium and hardwood models are available in subtle shades such as pale green, blue or grey. An aluminium frame may give graceful, slender beams and supports, whereas timber, such as a chunky green oak frame, will provide character in its shape and texture and can be designed to look like an integral part of the building. Or you could opt for an orangery style, incorporating stone or brickwork that matches the main house.

Adding trellis and climbing plants where the new structure meets the old will help merge two buildings, and continuing stone or brick flooring from the conservatory into the garden will link these areas. ➔

PHOTOGRAPH OPPOSITE: BESPOKE CONSERVATORY MADE FROM SUSTAINABLE HARDWOOD, DOUBLE-GLAZED WITH SELF-CLEAN, SOLAR-CONTROL GLASS TO THE ROOF, PAINTED IN GRANT WHITE EXTERIOR AND GLOSS TOWER INTERIOR EGG-SHELL PAINT; FROM £35,000; WARSTON & LANGINGER

BRINGING 'THE GARDEN INSIDE

The conservatory, as an extension of the garden, provides as much pleasure today as it did when introduced in the 18th century for cultivating plants and ripening fruit. This way, you don't sacrifice outside space; you just incorporate it into the house. Add shelves to hold small plants, and place larger ones in floor-standing troughs and tubs. Floors can be tiled (red quarry or patterned encaustic), stone, old brick or rough boards. Include a potting bench for a 'working' space – or furnish it with chairs and a simple table, and enjoy the light and greenery.



THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT

A small ledge above the door to the garden is the perfect spot to display a collection of vintage lanterns

TOP RIGHT An old terracotta floor mixed with worn wicker and wooden furniture brings a rustic look to a conservatory

BOTTOM This elegant addition with its minimal structure seamlessly merges inside and outside spaces

OPPOSITE Boarded walls and a brick floor give an instant feeling of the outdoors



- 1 Casablanca floor tiles, £1.65 each, Mandarin Stone
- 2 Zinc-top wooden large potting bench, £280, Garden Trading

- at Country Living General Store
- 5 Garden room small 'drawer' shelf, £85, An Angel at My Table



CREATING A HIDEAWAY

Claim the room as your own and furnish it with favourite things to make a private sanctuary – like a year-round summerhouse. Add comfortable chairs and cushions, along with pictures, bookshelves and perhaps a small desk, and use it as a reading room, sewing room or studio. Floorboards painted a pale shade will make the most of all the natural light, and a traditional woodburning stove will keep the room warm and welcoming even in winter (insulated conservatory flues can be put through a glass roof).



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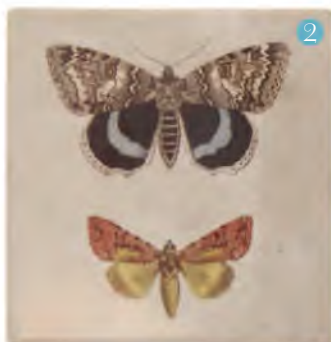
Introduce relaxed seating, patterned cushions and rugs to create an inviting feel all year round

TOP RIGHT A bright room provides the ideal light for a hobby such as painting or sewing

BOTTOM A climber growing indoors brings a wonderful outdoor air ➔



- 1 Peony and roses cushion, £42, Indigo & Rose at Country Living General Store
- 2 Ceramic butterfly coasters, £6.50 (set of four), Sass & Belle
- 3 Round wicker chair, £178, Design Vintage





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THIS PAGE Painting a conservatory white will make the most of the natural light ➔




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1 **THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT**
This modern addition has mirrored the roofline of the thatch to remain in keeping with the original house
TOP RIGHT Wooden boarding on both walls of this kitchen makes the new room feel part of the old house
BOTTOM LEFT Wooden floorboards draw the eye towards the door, making the space feel larger
BOTTOM RIGHT The black roof beams echo the large dresser and framed sketches on the wall for a cohesive look ➔

PHOTOGRAPH TOP RIGHT BY GAP INTERIORS/H&L/ELSA YOUNG. STYLING BY LEANA SCHOEMAN

- 1** Grey Majadas floor tiles, £222/sq metre, Bert & May
- 2** Woven straw basket, £25, French Connection
- 3** Jar tealight lantern, £7.50, Nordic House
For stockists, see *Where to Buy*



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A **APROPOS**

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ARBORETA

(0800 288 8333; arboreta-oak.com)

Specialises in oak-framed structures mixing traditional craftsmanship with modern engineering, and ensuring all additions are in keeping with the existing buildings.

D **DAVID SALISBURY**

(01278 764444; davidsalisbury.com)

Orangeries, conservatories, and timber and glass extensions. Its new 'rainbow roof glass' option creates an illusion of colour from inside the structure.

E **THE ENGLISH GLASSHOUSE**

(0845 652 7300; theenglishglasshouse.co.uk) Elegant conservatories and

orangeries built from hardwood, oak and 'engineered' timber, in traditional or modern designs that will blend with everything from listed buildings to new-builds. Modern glazing provides year-round temperature control.

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H **HAMPTON CONSERVATORIES**

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A 30-year history in bespoke hardwood conservatories, orangeries and botanical garden rooms. Styles range from classic to modern, including designs that blend sympathetically

CL directory

with listed Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and Gothic buildings.

I **IGLOO CONSERVATORIES**

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Specialises in extensions using green oak frames with large glass panels and concealed joins to create rooms that appear to be open-sided.

J **JULIUS BAHN**

(03444 171400; juliusbahn.co.uk)

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M **MALBROOK CONSERVATORIES**

(020 8780 5522;

malbrook.co.uk) Designs, manufactures and installs conservatories, orangeries and garden rooms, working exclusively in hardwood timber, with custom-designed details.

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(020 7881 5700; marston-and-langinger.com)

Builds unique, quality garden rooms based on timber-framed structures. Designs have an elegant sense of scale and proportion with interesting details, so that each one is in harmony with its surroundings. Also has a collection of paint for interior and exterior use, as well as wicker furniture and handmade blinds.

MONTPELIER JOINERY

(01384 279933; montpelierjoinery.com)

From the same people behind Prime Oak (Andrew Whitlock and Warren Lowe), Montpelier supplies durable, hand-painted garden rooms and orangeries, with partially glazed or fully tiled roofs and bespoke bi-fold doors.

O **THE OAK GLASSHOUSE COMPANY**

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(01494 450045;

opusconservatories.co.uk)

Bespoke hardwood conservatories, orangeries and garden rooms in Victorian, Edwardian and contemporary designs to complement a range of architecture. Can also provide underfloor heating, blinds and air conditioning.

P **PRIME OAK**

(01384 296611; primeoak.co.uk)

Manufactures and constructs oak-frame garden rooms and orangeries using seasoned oak from its own drying yards. Focused on green processes and sourcing material from sustainable sources.

V **VALE GARDEN HOUSES**

(01476 564433;

valegardenhouses.co.uk)

A family business manufacturing bespoke conservatories, which are pre-built in its workshops to shorten the on-site installation process. Committed to being environmentally friendly, and has a conservatory collection designed in association with the National Trust.

W **WESTBURY GARDEN ROOMS**

(01245 809612;

westburygardenrooms.com)

Essex-based company supplying individually constructed garden rooms and orangeries in traditional designs to complement the original building.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GAP INTERIORS/RACHEL WHITING; GETTY; HEARST STUDIOS; HOUSE OF PICTURES - TOMMY DURATH AND SOFI SYKFONT; LOUPE IMAGES - JAN BALDWIN, SIMON BROWN AND EARL CARTER; NARRATIVES/JAN BALDWIN



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WHAT TO SEE *August*



HEAVENLY HEATHER

during sultry August days, the uplands and moorlands of Britain become a haze of pinky-purple blooms buzzing with bees and covered with butterflies.

Common heather, or ling, acquired its Latin name of *Calluna vulgaris* from the Greek word *kallunein*, meaning to beautify or sweep clean, in reference to its traditional use in besom brooms. In the past, it has also served as a yellow dye for wool, an ingredient in tanning leather and, in the Middle Ages, was mixed with malt to make heather-beer before hops came into common usage. Vital to the raising of grouse, which require established plants to nest in, heather has a strong association with Scotland, where it can be found in abundance. Here, the less common white version is thought to bring luck to anyone who carries it, a tradition brought from Balmoral by Queen Victoria. To this day, sprigs are sold as charms and worked into bridal bouquets.

COMPILED BY ANNA JURY AND CHARLOTTE DEAR



DOWN ON THE FARM

Helen Browning reveals what is taking place on her mixed organic holding in Wiltshire

AUGUST IS A DUSTY month – the wheat harvest is in full swing with the grain drier fired up and running from dawn until late. While the arable team are out on their tractors, others are getting ready for calving. The heavily pregnant cows are enjoying time on our chalk valley pasture, full of wild flowers and herbs. I am convinced

they give birth more easily, and are generally healthier, having grazed this varied sward and been kept fit, walking up the banks. Over the bank holiday, it's time for some fun, provided by a mini festival at our local pub. There's music, and great food from the farm, plus the chance for villagers to meet our animals. For our staff, however, it's more likely



to be a pint in a deckchair in the shade of the garden. For more about Helen's farm, see helenbrowningorganic.co.uk.

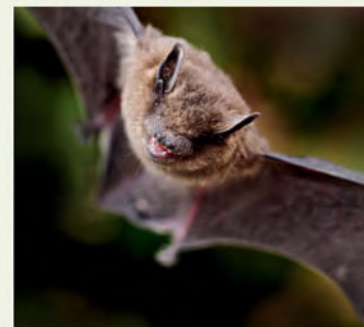


IN NATURE

Naturalist Simon King offers tips about the wild visitors you will see in your garden

LONG, WARM, LATE summer evenings are the perfect time to experience the best of British nightlife – not clubs and bars, but brilliant bats! Many are making the most of the proliferation of flying insects at this time of year, but they live in a world apart from our sensory perception – slicing through the night sky with the aid of echolocation. A bat

detector is a wonderful way to reveal the activities of these mammals; the hand-held devices pick up the ultrasonic squeaks used by the bats to find their way, and convert them into clicks and whistles audible to the human ear. Some species rarely venture out before it is totally dark, but others, including the common pipistrelle (above right) and the noctule, are often on the



wing at dusk and can be seen with the naked eye. To learn about Simon's work, see simonkingwildlife.com.

ENJOY A SLOW SUNDAY

Why not set aside one day a week to savour the simple pleasures in life?



BE A STARGAZER

This is the best time of year to see shooting stars, with the Perseid meteor shower (seen above) one of the brightest visible from Britain, peaking around 12-13 August. This year, it coincides with the waning moon appearing at its slimmest, making the sky darker, so it could be a spectacular display. It helps to be away from city lights but you don't need specialist equipment to see these galactic fireworks. Binoculars are handy for viewing stars but aren't required when scanning for meteors. Just lie back and study the sky – the longer you look, the more you'll notice. A deckchair, blanket and Thermos of hot chocolate will keep you comfortable. For a useful guide, go to downloads.bbc.co.uk/tv/stargazinglive/sgl_starguide2015.pdf or read *2015 Guide to the Night Sky: A Month-by-Month Guide to Exploring the Skies Above Britain and Ireland* (Collins, £6.99).



MAKE LOLLIES

They're not just for children – use up a fruit glut by blitzing together strawberries, raspberries and blackcurrants with natural yogurt, then freezing in moulds for a delicious, cooling treat.



LOOK FOR BERRIES

There's a nostalgic pleasure to be had in picking the ripe berries; why are the best ones just out of reach? Take a basket and scour the hedgerows, avoiding brambles near busy roads or those close to the ground.



A SIMPLE MAKE... PRINTED LAMPSHADE

Create a unique drum shade with a pretty roller

- 1 Tape a piece of linen fabric to a wall or board, pulling tight to remove creases.
- 2 Take the dry foam roller (wall applicator)* and slot it into the middle hole on the handle bracket. The wall applicator helps to create a gentle, aged finish.
- 3 Pour a small amount of water-based matt eggshell paint onto a flat piece of board. Roll the roller back and forth until it is soaked through with paint. Remove excess paint on a piece of paper.
- 4 Place the patterned roller into the elongated slots and turn it to cover the pattern in paint from the foam roller. Roll off the excess on the paper.
- 5 Starting at the top left corner, working in vertical columns, run the roller down the fabric. Hold it at 45° to the wall or board throughout and keep an even pressure.
- 6 Allowing the next run to slightly overlap the previous line of pattern, continue all across the fabric. Leave to dry.
- 7 Use a lampshade kit to finish the project.

SLOW SUNDAY WORDS BY KATE LANGRISH. SIMPLE MAKE PHOTOGRAPH AND STYLING BY CLARE BOSANQUET. *FLOCK-PATTERNED PAINT ROLLER, £20; WALL APPLICATOR, £12; BOTH THE PAINTED HOUSE. LAMPSHADE KIT, FROM A SELECTION, NEEDORAT. FOR STOCKISTS, SEE WHERE TO BUY

3

COURSES... IN SOAP MAKING

- 1 **Soap making** Ruth Romano, Siddington, Cheshire Gain an insight into different techniques through this introductory course and make a selection to take home with you. Lunch and refreshments included. 15 August; £95 (07553 147726; ruthromano.com).
- 2 **Introduction to soap making** Rowan Tree Studio, Bideford, North Devon Discover the art of this craft and create your own luxurious handmade bar using traditional methods and the finest nourishing oils and botanicals. 16 August; £50 (01237 431942; rowantreestudio.co.uk).
- 3 **Beeswax soap and balms** Humble By Nature, Penalt, Monmouthshire Learn the basics of the cold-pressed method and leave with your own sumptuous honey variety. 18 September; £40 (01600 714595; humblebynature.com). ➔



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MEET TWO COUNTRY CHARACTERS



If you're heading to the south coast this month, be sure to look out for Maggie Scorer and her faithful golden retriever (above), who will be nearing the final leg of an incredible expedition. In March, Maggie, a grandmother of eight from Aldeburgh, Suffolk, set off on a 5,000-mile cycle ride around Britain's coastline, with eight-year-old Oscar in tow. She hopes to cover an average of 30 miles per day, overnighing at B&Bs and joined by supportive friends and family along the way. This dry-land adventure sees the pair, who have previously sailed halfway around the world together, raising money for Sands, a stillbirth and neonatal death charity, and Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research. "While never wanting to lose sight of why I'm doing it, mostly I would just like to enjoy it!" Maggie says. She will be posting regular updates along the way and you can follow their progress at dogontour.co.uk.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Lugg

Place-name element that is derived from the base *leuk* or *llug*, meaning 'bright'. In Wales, the Llugwy and Lligwy are both 'bright streams'.



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Are you planning a trip to the great British coast this month? Take an extra moment to listen out for the sounds of our shores. This summer, the National Trust, The British Library and National Trust Scotland are asking seaside residents and holidaymakers to record and upload audio snapshots, using their smartphones, tablets or handheld recorders, which will then appear on a 'soundmap' of the UK coastline. Whether it's the waves crashing on a Cornish cliffside (as above), a kettle whistling from a beach hut or even a historic recording found on an old '78 hidden in the attic, the project is a perfect excuse to explore, celebrate and help preserve the atmosphere of our coastline for future generations. Recordings should last up to five minutes and must be submitted by 21 September 2015 to nationaltrust.org.uk/coast - visit the website for more details, too.

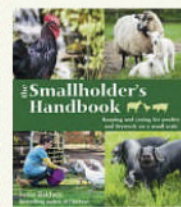
Don't forget to share your sounds on social media using #lovethcoast.



Eco tip

Leave a section of your lawn uncut to provide a home for egg-laying insects such as butterflies.

FROM YOUR ARMCHAIR



Start, plan and manage your own smallholding with the very useful *The Smallholder's Handbook*, Suzie Baldwin's manual to keeping poultry, pigs, sheep and bees (Kyle Books, £18.99)**

5

CYCLE TRAILS

3

For families Camel Trail, Bodmin to Padstow, Cornwall Stop for a picnic overlooking Rock Beach as you explore the stunning Camel Estuary along a disused railway (visitcornwall.com).

1

For scenery Taff Trail, Cardiff Bay to Brecon, South Wales

Discover the Brecon Beacons as you follow the River Taff through forests, open meadows and old railway paths (tafftrail.org.uk).

2

For an urban adventure Richmond Bridge to Weybridge, Surrey Pass Marble Hill House, Hampton Court and Eel Pie Island as you swap the city for more rural environs (visitthames.co.uk).

4

For woodland Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire Choose between a variety of routes, from country lanes to Cannop Valley paths or even forest tracks for mountain bikes (wyedean-tourism.co.uk).

5

For a challenge Yorkshire Dales Cycleway, Skipton, North Yorkshire Test your limits through the National Park's dales (cyclethedailes.org.uk). For more routes, see our health feature on p145. ➔



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FURTHER AFIELD



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT The town marketplace; the rustic exterior of Orles Barn Restaurant with Rooms; savour the delights of Truffles Delicatessen; enjoy local produce at The King's Head

Five miles downstream from Ross-on-Wye is **Goodrich Castle**, a Norman ruin once owned by King Richard the Lionheart – explore the many rooms before embarking on a challenging but rewarding climb to the top of the keep. Discover the **Wye Valley** from the water by spending a day canoeing the river or enjoy the view from above at **Symonds Yat Rock**. Finally, cross into Wales for a visit to Cistercian **Tintern Abbey** (above), the best-preserved medieval abbey in the country.



LOCAL LANDMARK

The spire of St Mary's Church has stood prominently above the town as a beacon from all directions for 700 years. ➔

WORDS BY CHARLOTTE DEAR



A NIGHT AND A DAY IN... ROSS-ON-WYE

Stay...

At Orles Barn Restaurant with Rooms, a restored working farm dating back to the 17th century. Set in the grounds of an old orchard, each of the six boutique rooms are named after a different variety of Herefordshire apple. They have been individually decorated with Sanderson wallpapers and Farrow & Ball paints, while the bar and sitting room downstairs offer a peaceful space to relax. Breakfast is served in the conservatory overlooking the garden and includes tasty Herefordshire bacon, eggs from a local farm, and fresh fruit and juices. Double B&B from £110 (01989 562155; orles-barn.co.uk).

Eat...

A hearty three-course evening meal or Sunday lunch at the Moody Cow Pub in nearby Upton Bishop, and choose from Chris Burgess and Dawn Caddick's selection of dishes such as pork belly served on a potato rosti with fresh vegetables followed by homemade orange blossom crème brûlée. The King's Head offers fresh local produce, from steak and Wye Valley ale pie to roasted scallops, or enjoy a slice of freshly baked carrot cake or a gluten-free chocolate brownie at Pots and Pieces Teashop before discovering the selection of gifts on display.

Browse...

The independent shops and stalls that surround the historic marketplace. Truffles Delicatessen stocks an impressive selection of local cheeses, chutneys and meats, plus terrines and soufflés made by chef James Arbourne. For organic produce, try Field Fayre, which supplies apple juice from nearby Ragmans Farm and eggs from Middle Crwys' mixed flock. Tucked away behind the main cobbled street is Sarah D'Arcy's showroom and studio; pick up one of her intriguing collection of ceramic animals as a memento. Renowned homeware store Baileys is just outside the town, too, at Bridstow.

Don't miss Ross-on-Wye Summer Carnival on 1 August, when the cobbled streets play host to an entertaining procession of local groups, charities and traders (rosscarnival.org.uk).

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY; GETTY; ILLUSTRATIONS BY JO BIRD, JAMES CAREY, JOANNA KERR

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scandi style

Go for the Nordic look this summer with simple chunky knits, stylish shirt dresses, versatile pinafores and chic flowing headscarves

STYLING BY EMMA FREEMANTLE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CRAIG FORDHAM



Headscarf in silk/
cotton, £18/m, The
Cloth Shop. **Vest**,
from a selection,
Miopo. Knitted woollen

waistcoat, £165,
Hambro & Miller.
Cotton drawstring
trousers, £25,
Denny Andrews



Choose a pared-back palette of crisp white, cool charcoal and classic navy





OPPOSITE Cotton shirt-dress, from a selection, Sunspel. Linen/modal tank top, £7.90, Uniqlo. Striped cotton pants, £16, Asos. Leather rucksack, £350, Ally Capellino

THIS PAGE, TOP Corelli cotton apron-dress, £139, Cabbages & Roses. T-shirt dress, from a selection, Miopo. Birkenstock leather sandals, £69.95, The Natural Shoe Store

ABOVE LEFT Organic cotton scarf, £40, Denny Andrews. Vintage linen smock, £75, Josephine Ryan
ABOVE RIGHT Headscarf in linen, £19/m, The Cloth Shop. Sailor cotton/

wool jumper, £90, Petit Bateau. Checked cotton skirt, £70, Tara Starlet. Vintage cotton stockings, from £45, Worn with Love. Boots, from a selection, The Natural Shoe Store ➔



ABOVE LEFT

Headscarf in striped cotton, £18/m, The Cloth Shop. **Vest top**, from a selection, Miopo. **Drawstring trousers**, as before

TOP RIGHT

Vintage smock, £65, Portobello Market ➔



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drawstring **trousers**,
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A woman with long blonde hair is shown in profile, looking down. She is wearing a light-colored headscarf, a white long-sleeved shirt-dress, and a black jacket. She is holding a pair of black leather sandals with cork soles. The background is a field of tall grass under a clear sky.

Headscarf in linen, £19/m, The Cloth Shop. Cotton shirt-dress, £150, APC. Swimsuit, £185, Melissa Odabash at Rosato Collections. Birkenstock sandals, £69.95, The Natural Shoe Store 

 For stockists, see *Where to Buy*

MODEL: EMMA G AT MODELS 1. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: LIZZIE COURT USING ESTÉE LAUDER AND PAUL MITCHELL PRODUCTS



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A dyeing art

In a small studio overlooking lush Devon countryside, Isabel Knowles prepares plants, roots and leaves to add vibrant natural colour to her one-off dress designs

WORDS BY CAROLINE ATKINS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LISA LINDER



The community market garden at Chagford in Devon is a busy place on Thursdays. It's harvest day, when volunteers descend to fill the boxes that are delivered to members around the county every week. Dressmaker Isabel Knowles is helping with the picking and packing of calabrese and courgettes, bright peppers and feathery heads of fennel. But the produce she will take home to her parents' 19th-century house, perched on the edge of a valley in the village of Lustleigh about eight miles away, is slightly different to the standard box. As well as the week's kitchen supplies, Isabel has clumps of purple beetroot, plus handfuls of woad leaves and madder roots, which she will use to dye some of the handmade skirts, tops and dresses she sells online.

In Isabel's studio, which has views across to the woods of Lustleigh Cleave on Dartmoor, there are bolts of material on shelves and in baskets, and sections of stiff Manila paper patterns hanging on a rail alongside made-up dresses. Spread out on the big tailor's table is a blue dress waiting for Isabel to finish its rounded white collar. From her collection of threads, thimbles and vintage buttons, she digs out a 1940s sewing manual and reads a few lines of the opening page that sum up her enjoyment of her craft: "The way a well-balanced pair of ➤



Isabel finds a sense of fulfilment in producing something that's unique

dressmaking shears feels in the hand, and the sound of sharp blades cutting through cloth... a thimble that fits the finger and the rhythm of pulling a finely tempered steel needle through fabrics, there is something satisfying in all this."

These are old-fashioned pleasures for a designer who is only 25 and makes her living via the internet, but Isabel finds a sense of fulfilment in producing something that's unique. When she was a teenager, that meant customising her own clothes; later, though no one taught her dressmaking, she worked out how to create garments by taking others apart and seeing how they fitted together: "Even now, I

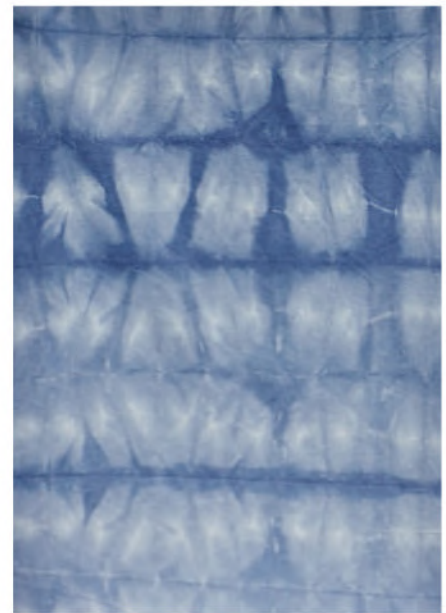
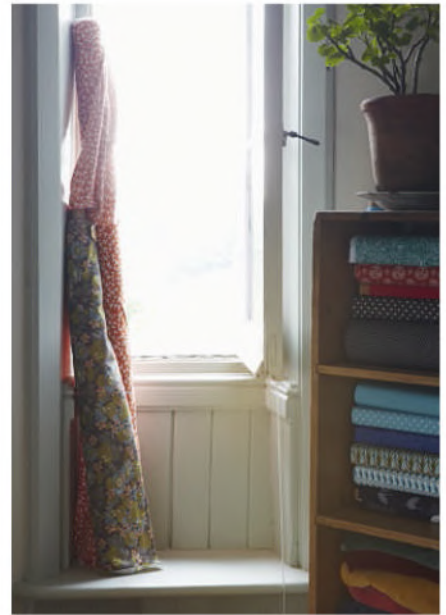
don't sketch the design first – I just play around with the fabric itself." Her foundation diploma at Chelsea College of Arts gave her further opportunity to develop her skills, then, when back in Devon, she discovered an irresistible fox-print organic cotton and decided to buy four bolts of it to make dresses. She produced enough to sell and turn a small profit, which she invested in more material.

That was just over four years ago and it marked the launch of her business specialising in classic, vintage-inspired flattering shapes. "I get inspiration from books, including *Cold Comfort Farm* and *I Capture the Castle*, which reflect the jazz era from a country

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE

Isabel harvests leaves, flowers and vegetables, including marigolds, beetroot and madder roots, to create natural dyes for her dresses, which she makes using ethically sourced fabrics





“I like working with woad because it has a strong tradition in the British textile trade”

angle,” she explains. All her designs are either limited editions, one-of-a-kind Liberty-print designs or hand-dyed dresses, with prices from £90 to £240.

It was the idea of making each dress as individual as possible that led to Isabel's interest in dyeing cloth. Starting with plain white cotton, which is Fairtrade or hand-woven in the workers' own homes in India, she colours some dresses whole – including the blue one on her work table, which was dipped into the big tub of woad, hem first, so that the shade faded to white at the top. For other designs, she dyes the fabric first, creating either plain hues, which she decorates with contrasting braids and embroidered

or block-printed collars, or experimenting with different patterns, such as the rippled stripe she has achieved by ruching the cloth into stitched folds before dyeing, and unpicking the threads afterwards. She enjoys the magic of watching material turn blue as it emerges from sludgy brown woad leaves and makes contact with the air. “I also like working with this plant because it has a strong tradition in the British textile trade,” she says.

In the bathroom adjoining her studio, the ceiling airer is hung with bunches of marigolds, the petals of which she will store in jars for a range of yellow-golds, while she uses madder roots for an orangey ➔

THIS PAGE Isabel's home studio is orderly and organised – each garment is made to order and intended to last. She doesn't always sketch a design first, but experiments with colour and the fabric to get inspiration

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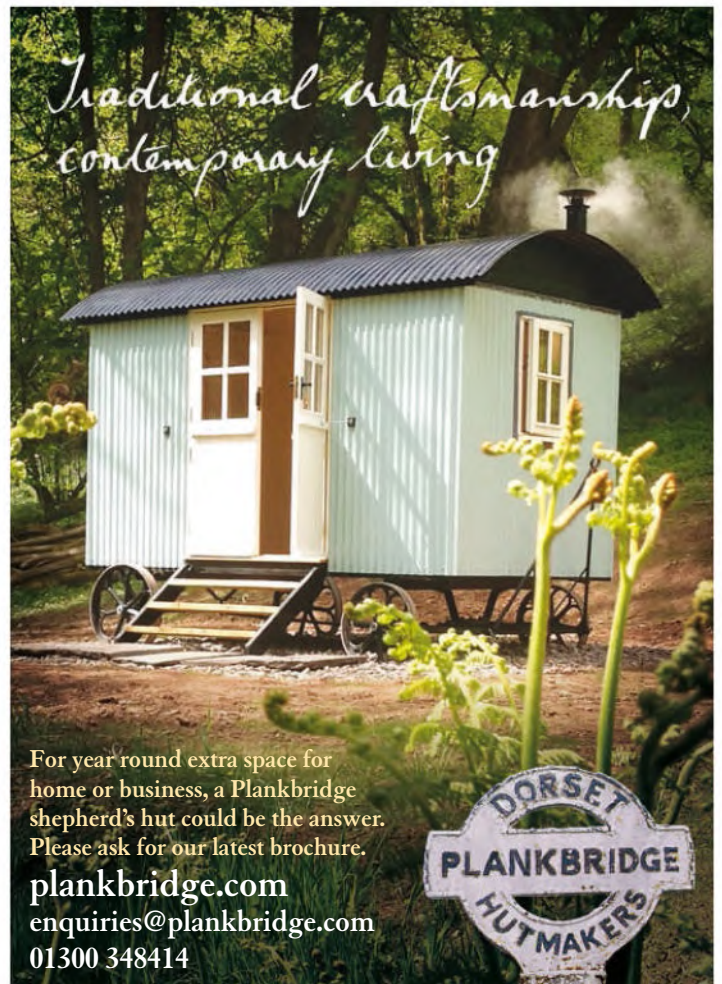


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red. Using natural dyes means Isabel can't guarantee that what you buy will match the images on her website: "The most satisfying thing about the process is that you never know quite what you'll end up with." However, each dress is an original, hand-finished from the bias-bound seams to the Isabel Knowles label. She has repeat buyers as far apart as Scotland and New York – "I update customers at different stages, and tell them when their order is on its way" – and the personal contact extends to offering a repair service: "No one has taken me up on that yet, but if they send something back, I'll happily mend it for them. I want my garments to be worn for years."

Her belief that clothes shouldn't be disposable means she focuses on timeless collections rather than trends. One range has dresses named after PG Wodehouse characters – she listens to the audiobooks while she works. Another, called Quite Contrary, conjures up wild flowers and nursery rhymes. Her latest line, designed in collaboration with London artist and printmaker Jo Waterhouse, is folk-inspired (hence the Frida Kahlo postcards and images of embroidered skirt hems on her pinboard).

Back in the studio, Isabel has just finished stitching a braid edging onto the collar of the blue-dipped dress and added her label just above the zip. She enjoys the way these details vary the pace of her work: "I can end up sewing late into the night if there's nothing to stop me." Once an order is complete, she hand-writes the invoice and a thank-you letter, wraps the garment in tissue paper tied with an Isabel Knowles swing tag, and decorates the padded envelope with a floral panel before taking it to the village post office. Clearly, both time-honoured skills and traditional values are alive and well in the hands of this young craftswoman. 🇬🇧

i To see Isabel's designs, visit isabelknowles.com.

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READING THE LANDSCAPE *chalk*

In a quarterly series, author and natural history writer **Patrick Barkham** walks through different areas of the British countryside, celebrating their features and revealing the forces that have shaped them

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANGELA HARDING

*E*nveloped in the cool, dark embrace of an old yew, chalky rubble gleaming at my feet, I found it momentarily impossible to get a sense of place, season or even temperature. Then, walking out of Little Kings Wood in Surrey, I was propelled into a spectacular summer scene, one of the most dramatic our country can offer.

The wood gave way to a mosaic of pasture, small gardens unofficially divided by eruptions of stunted juniper and hawthorn, and groves of pale-trunked ash and beech. A wild meadow of marjoram, scabious and knapweed danced with chalkhill blue butterflies. The hot, dry air was scented with thyme, on a slope so steep that it disappeared from view. Although this chalk downland is quintessentially English, it felt exotic and romantic: I was transported to that scene in a flowery Italian landscape where Julian Sands kisses Helena Bonham Carter in *A Room With A View*.

Those of us who have only ever glanced at a map of the North Downs might assume that all wildlife has been lost to the sprawl of Guildford, Leatherhead and Reigate. But when I entered this secret world of holloways, ancient drove roads, yew trees and hot chalk cliffs, it was as if suburbia and London – just over the hill – were hallucinations.

No other country in the world is defined by chalk the way England is. In the Cretaceous period (*'creta'* is the Latin term for this rock) more than 60 million years ago, a tropical sea lay over what is now northern Europe. The tiny skeletons of plants that fell to its floor were compressed over millions of years to form chalk, brilliant white from calcium carbonate. In global terms, it is rare and, although such cliffs are found in Germany, Denmark and, of course, over the Channel in France, these aren't as striking as the White Cliffs

of Dover. These are our national emblem and the place where the 153-mile-long ridge of the North Downs is brought to a halt by the sea.

We may dominate our island, but chalk still shapes us. The North Downs are not spectacularly tall but their southern escarpment is steep enough to defy invaders, the plough and housing developments. Setting out from Guildford station, I noticed that the chalk immediately asserted itself over modern civilisation, cliffs rising to the east, the remains of old mines. In the 5,000 years since we began clearing the heavily wooded downs, we have also delved into them. Chalk, and the flints found within it, were used as a building material in the Middle Ages. For centuries, it was also burned in lime kilns to create lime mortar and fertiliser to spread on fields.

This rock creates an alkaline soil and so I was puzzled as I climbed St Martha's Hill out of the Wey Valley. The woods were birch and Scots pine; beneath them grew gorse and bracken – signs of acidic ground. At the top of the 175m hill, with no vehicular access, stood St Martha's Church, one of the most scenic places of worship in the country. The view was almost aerial, revealing green folds of English countryside disappearing into the haze. There are Bronze Age ditches on St Martha's, the name of which may be a corruption of martyr. It is thought that pagans burned the Christians who worshipped here before the Norman church was built. Victorians restored the church after a huge accidental explosion in a gunpowder works on the south side of the hill and they may have invented the idea that the North Downs was a pilgrims' way for worshippers travelling between Winchester and Canterbury. Whatever the truth of this, people have used the ridge as a routeway for millennia, farmers driving animals to market along ancient drove roads.

The riddle of the acidic plants was solved when the North ➞

A whole host of birds, including thrushes, can be seen while tramping the North Downs Way. Known for their song, they often lay a second clutch of pale-blue speckled eggs in their cup-shaped nests in summer






Downs Way ducked off St Martha's Hill and climbed another ridge to the north. Although often mistaken for part of the chalk ridge, St Martha's was actually a separate one composed of greensand, and so supported completely different flora. Gradually, the scene changed from plantations to steep chalk meadows. This kind of grassland was created when our ancestors cleared the woods and grazed livestock on the downs. Because the soil is thin and dry, lush grass cannot establish itself and strangle out the flora. A square metre can easily contain 50 species: primroses in spring, followed by bee and pyramidal orchids, and then the midsummer blooms of rockrose, marjoram, thyme, knapweed and scabious.

This diversity, and the heat of the south-facing slope, is relished by invertebrates from ants to bumblebees. Most visible are the butterflies. If early August is sunny, the chalkhill blue can emerge by the thousand. There are brilliant electric-hued Adonis blues,

clouded yellows and brown argus. These downs are also a stronghold for the rare silver-spotted skipper, which requires higher temperatures (in excess of 21°C) than any other British butterfly simply to fly. Put your hand close to the soil and you will feel a Mediterranean microclimate between sheltered tussocks of grass.

These vertiginous gardens are glorious but are only maintained through a big conservation effort: plenty of scrub clearance and traditional grazing. The small farms of old have disappeared and most paddocks are filled with horses, which are lovely but graze grass too closely to the ground for many kinds of flowers and butterflies. Only one per cent of the Surrey Hills remains 'unimproved' chalk grassland. Meadows that are fertilised and 'improved' lose their wild flowers.

I was momentarily blinded by the gloom when I left the dazzling slopes and passed under an immense yew, and yet these trees, 

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which thrive on the chalk where oaks and others struggle, possessed a magic of their own. This old specimen's trunk and main branches were entwined, tight together heading upwards, like a fistful of flower stalks. Its pinkish trunk, patchy bark flaking like a eucalyptus, was both immovable and sinuous, as if a limb might stretch out and somehow grab me.

Reluctantly, I abandoned the cool shade and took the public footpath through Denbies vineyard, England's biggest – the North Downs has similar geology and soil to the Champagne region of France. Having spent the day walking barely 20 miles from central London, I'd hardly seen a soul for long stretches and had been disturbed by only the occasional groan of a plane heaving into Gatwick or the toot-toot of the branch-line train approaching a level-crossing. I was the only passenger to clamber onto the train at Westhumble station and an hour later I was bemusedly walking down an escalator at Victoria Station. Chalk truly is time-travel. 🇬🇧



ON THE TRAIL

Enjoy Patrick's route along the North Downs Way

Length: 15 miles, which takes approximately eight hours

STARTING POINT

Guildford railway station

REFERENCES

OS Explorer 145, Guildford & Farnham;
OS Explorer 146, Dorking, Box Hill
& Reigate; nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way; nationaltrust.org.uk/box-hill; denbies.co.uk; stmarthaschurch.org.uk/history

I walked almost 15 miles east along the North Downs Way from Guildford station to Westhumble's in a day, but it is fairly strenuous. While St Martha's Hill is a highlight, parts of the first eight miles are through coniferous plantations. You can avoid this by starting at Gomshall station and walking to Westhumble. This seven-mile stretch is one of the best on the Downs. Much of the chalk grassland, such as Blatchford Down, is protected by the National Trust. On the southerly side, there are spectacular vistas over the rolling, wooded Weald – particularly at Ranmore Common, with the spire of Dorking in the foreground. If you have energy left when the path runs through Denbies vineyard, you can cross the River Mole via stepping stones and climb Box Hill, named after its wild box trees and famed as a place for picnics since Jane Austen's day. It is worth straying off the path to enjoy the tranquillity, flowers and butterflies. There are refreshments at Newlands Corner, Box Hill and Westhumble station.



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A TASTE OF THE GOOD LIFE

In our practical series, Bella Ivins invites us onto the Sussex plot she shares with husband Nick and daughters Peggy and Flora to reveal their tips for growing your own food, raising livestock and making the most of fresh produce in simple recipes

This month: keeping sheep

INTERVIEW BY RUTH CHANDLER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW MONTGOMERY • RECIPE BY ALISON WALKER



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YOU WILL NEED



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) BOTTLES AND RACK

Orphan newborn lambs require formula milk four times a day. This holder enables you to feed up to four simultaneously.

DAGGING SHEARS

This tool removes 'daglocks' – dung-caked pieces of fleece around lambs' hindquarters – which, if left, can lead to ailments, including flystrike.

CREEP FEED

Once they are around 35 days

old, lambs can be weaned from milk and fed pellets, which supplement their grass-based diet. Available in 'starter' and 'finisher' forms (for earlier and later stages, respectively).

HURDLES AND PINS

Use panels and fixings to create a square fold for the young animals. This can be moved easily onto fresh pasture once a patch of grass has been grazed sufficiently.

HOOF TRIMMERS

Regularly checking your sheep's feet and maintaining them with this tool will help prevent lameness in your flock.

FOOT SPRAY

Antibacterial formulations such as Foot Master cleanse the area and, along with iodine, help prevent infection.

ROPE HALTER

Use this simple harness when moving lambs. It is also essential if you intend to show

sheep, so familiarising them with it while young will make leading them easier later on.

ANTI-PEST SOLUTIONS

Crovet and similar medicated treatments are available to control ticks, flies and biting lice on lambs and sheep via an applicator.

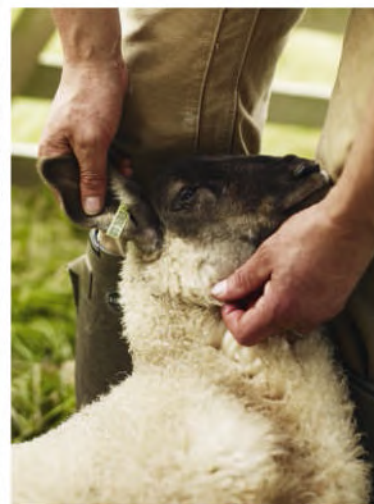
TAGS

Lambs and sheep must be identified with your County Parish Holding number and your flock mark. ➞



WE TAKE ON 'ORPHAN' – or 'sock' lambs, as they are known here in Sussex – each spring when they're just a few days old. Having only two teats, ewes cannot feed triplets when they occasionally occur (twins are more common), so once the farmer is confident that they will survive, he separates the weakest lamb, which is then available to smallholders. Originally, we were put off having a small flock of sheep, as we had heard it would take up too much time and work – but this way, as it doesn't involve breeding, you have them when the weather's mostly fair and don't need to shear them, so it's easier. It's the third time we've followed this method, which perfectly fits our approach to the good life: minimising the work over winter by raising animals for meat during spring and summer only.

Our rack holds four bottles, so that's how many lambs we have at a time. This year, they are a Romney and Suffolk cross. At first, the young animals require frequent care. They start off on a bed of straw in the open-fronted airy potting shed in our kitchen garden where they are kept safe from predators, including our dogs. On warm days, we put them out onto grass in a square of wooden hurdles but shut them up again at night until they are large enough to defend themselves from foxes. Having the fold means that we can move them daily around the front meadow and garden so they ➡



CHECKING SHEEP FOR HEALTH

Carry out a daily assessment, called 'looking', taking time to observe your flock and investigate any anomalies. On a monthly basis, lambs need weighing, a foot examination and 'dagging', in which any soiled areas of fleece on hindquarters are removed to help prevent infestations such as flystrike (a condition that results from flies laying eggs in the area, leading to maggots). An application of a product such as Crovect (while wearing protective equipment) along the back and legs of the lamb will repel insects, and can also be used to treat already affected areas. Sprays for hooves help to avoid scald, an infection that can lead to lameness. These measures, coupled with keeping livestock in drier seasons, should result in a healthy flock.



GETTING STARTED IN SHEEPKEEPING

Begin by raising orphan lambs, which can be fattened for slaughter in autumn, and you'll discover that the husbandry of these animals isn't complicated

Contact a local farmer Find out where your nearest flock is well before lambing commences. Depending on your location and the individual farm, this could be as early as January or as late as April. Register your interest with the owner, so they can alert you when animals become available. If there are several such holdings in your area, it is wise to research the breeds being raised on each – there are thought to be more types of sheep in the UK than in any other country in the world – so you can opt for one that suits your needs. The

farmer may be willing to transport them to you, but you should check that you don't need to buy your own trailer for the purpose (you will also require one for the journey to the abattoir in the autumn). **Do the paperwork** In order to keep sheep (and pigs), you first must have a County Parish Holding number, which is issued by the Rural Payments Agency (0345 603 7777; gov.uk). You and the farmer from whom you purchase the livestock need to fill in movement licence forms through the Animal Reporting

and Movement Service (arams.co.uk). When you collect them, each lamb should have a tag in one ear bearing the flock number and individual identification details. **Provide suitable housing for your flock** Initially, it's necessary to identify a place in an airy open outbuilding or shed in which to keep lambs warm and dry with plenty of straw. Purchasing a heat lamp will also mean you can care for any weak or sick ones (in isolation). **Create a pen** This non-permanent structure means you can easily relocate your

flock to lush and healthy grass once it has grazed an area. It is also an efficient way to keep lambs contained if you don't have a fence. As well as wooden hurdles (shown), those made of lightweight aluminium and woven hazel are suitable and can be bought from an agricultural supply company. **Buy halters** These are made from either leather (with buckles) or woven rope (the latter tend to be less fiddly to secure) and allow children to take them along paths under a degree of control as well as leading them between sites.



have plenty of fresh grazing available. Elsewhere on our land, we use wire stock fence and three strands of electric fence wire to keep them in.

The routine is fairly intense for the first few weeks when lambs need to be given formula milk every few hours – but after that it eases off. We often collect them during the Easter holidays when Peggy and Flora are charged with daytime bottle-feeding duties. For some reason they are less keen on the early morning and evening sessions, but have been known to join us in their pyjamas! Their friends – and the parents of their friends – inevitably end up participating, too, drawn to the universally appealing small creatures. After a few days, we begin giving them solid food and, at around five weeks old, wean them off milk entirely when we are sure they are each eating enough pellets and drinking plenty of water.

During the bottle-feeding period, the lambs become very tame and will call to us for more milk when we're out and about on the plot. Their high-pitched bleats carry a surprisingly long way. We encourage this, as they mature, with a bucket of creep so they follow us between areas of pasture – and, eventually, into the trailer – without any persuasion (or the help of a dog) and unnecessary stress. Running them back and forth along stony paths also hardens their

feet, helping to minimise health problems. A neighbour tells me that his escaped 80-strong flock was once found on the road by the police and happily followed the blue flashing lights all the way home. If there are a few tame ones, they lead the rest, which comes in handy!

Keeping sheep is a very rewarding pastime. The animals' ability to convert something as simple as grass into deliciously sweet and tender meat is remarkable. Their grazing is methodical and quiet, and I particularly enjoy watching ours in September when we move them onto the meadow at the front of the house – doing this means we needn't scythe and rake it off, plus they take out any grasses that compete with the wild flowers and therefore increase the flora.

At this stage, it's not long before they go off to the abattoir, so it's also a rather good end to their lives. The cuts, which we enjoy, include boned shoulder, legs, rack, shank, chops (Barnsley, chump and loin), mince, kidneys and a stewing pack, prepared by our butcher, and are kept in a dedicated freezer (alongside the one we reserve for our home-grown pork). They will feed our family of four for a year in all manner of hearty meals, from comforting lasagnes to succulent roasts. ➔

i Next month: the kitchen garden harvest

WHAT TO DO IN THE KITCHEN GARDEN THIS MONTH

- Sow successional crops of salads, winter lettuces and spring cabbage
- Hoe the top few inches of soil with a cultivator to prevent weeds taking hold
- Pick beans, tomatoes, sweetcorn and crystal lemon cucumbers
- Lift onions and garlic



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LOOKING AFTER SHEEP

You only need a few pieces of equipment, foodstuffs and techniques to raise a flock

- **Source milk and feed** Specialist formulas, such as Lamlac, a high-protein, high-fat kind that has added vitamins and trace elements, are created to emulate ewes' milk as closely as possible. Until they are 35 days old, lambs require one litre every 24 hours in three or four portions dispensed in sterilised bottles, bought from an agricultural store. Begin giving them creep feed when they're a week old. Increase the quantities according to the merchant's guidance. By the time of weaning at five weeks (done immediately rather than gradually), they should be eating 250g per day and drinking water. When ready for dispatch, the amount will have risen to 1.5kg.
- **Provide a constant supply of water** As they grow older, lambs easily overturn containers. To prevent this occurring and ensure they're hydrated, fix a galvanised ring to an inner corner of fencing to hold the bucket securely.
- **Learn how to handle your flock** In order to make examinations easier, it is wise to master the art of 'flipping' a sheep onto its rump. There are courses on which you are taught handling and can practise the method (see assingtonmill.com, plumpton.ac.uk and southyeofarm.co.uk). Essentially, you gently but firmly place your hand beneath the animal's jaw and turn its head towards its shoulder until it becomes unbalanced, then shift its weight onto its hindquarters against your legs. In this position, it is docile and will allow you to examine its feet.
- **Trim hooves** Once you've turned a sheep (as above), it is possible to cut away excess growth from the heel to the toe with a specialist tool. Remove only a little at a time to ensure you do not harm the animal. Along with foot maintenance, check for ailments (see previous page).
- **Assess when your lambs are ready to dispatch** Having been fed the correct quantities, this should be at around six months. However, an examination can indicate if you should keep them longer. This judgement of fitness and the proportion of fat to meat is called condition scoring. It involves handling the animal over and around the backbone in the loin area, tail root (also known as dock) and behind the last rib. As a beginner, it is hard to know what you are feeling for – especially through fleece. Consider asking for assistance from an experienced sheep-keeper, such as the breeder you bought your flock from. 🐑



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HOW TO... COOK DEVILLED KIDNEYS

Lambs' kidneys make a cheap yet satisfying supper dish and are very simple to prepare. Kidneys do deteriorate quickly, however, so make sure they are as fresh as possible and, if you buy them, cook within a day of purchase.

Preparation 20 minutes

Cooking 20 minutes **Serves** 4

12 lambs' kidneys
25g plain flour
large pinch of cayenne pepper
25g butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 celery stick, finely chopped
225g chestnut mushrooms, sliced
300ml dry white wine
1 tsp Dijon mustard
150ml crème fraîche
squeeze of lemon juice (optional)
freshly chopped parsley, to garnish

- 1 Cut the kidneys in half horizontally, then cut out the core. Put the flour on a plate and season with the cayenne pepper, salt and black pepper. Dust the kidneys with the flour, shaking off the excess.
- 2 Melt the butter in a large frying pan set over a medium heat. When it stops foaming, add the kidneys, onion, celery and mushrooms, and cook for 10 minutes until tender.
- 5 Stir in the leftover flour and cook for 1 minute. Gradually pour in the wine, stirring, to make a sauce. Add the mustard, and season with salt and black pepper. Simmer for 5 minutes, stir in the crème fraîche and bubble gently to heat through. Check the seasoning and add a squeeze of lemon juice if you like. Serve on toast for a light supper or with rice and vegetables for a more substantial meal.

Next month: pickled pears



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From the makers of





When an idea **BEARS** **FRUIT**

Since inheriting a Welsh fruit farm, four siblings have transformed it into a growing success, creating a modern PYO where visitors can enjoy a true taste of the countryside

WORDS BY CAROLINE WHEATER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL WARNE



On a warm summer's morning in the Vale of Glamorgan, south Wales, Hendrewennol Fruit Garden is coming to life. The owners of the PYO farm – siblings Tricia, Charles, Gerald and Toby Keen – bustle about in cherry-red polo shirts, welcoming visitors. Already in the main strawberry and raspberry field, clusters of adults and children fill up punnets with fruits in the sunshine. In another field, more pickers roam among the currants, tayberries, rhubarb and gooseberries, their fingers – and often faces, in the case of the young ones – stained with juice. Once satisfied with their haul, they amble back to Hendrewennol's newly built Fruit Barn café and farm shop for refreshment: barista coffee and homemade cake, a fruit smoothie or an ice cream swirled with fruit compote. As parents relax, their offspring head to the play area – filled with hay bales, a willow arbour, a log maze and a giant sandpit. There's a pay-to-enter maize maze, too, to counter any excess energy.

In the three years since the Keens inherited the Fruit Garden in 2012, they have transformed its fortunes, turning it into one of the Vale of Glamorgan's top tourist attractions. "Hendrewennol's season used to be ten weeks in the summer and it was reliant on an ageing and dwindling customer base," says older brother and financial whizz Charles. "Now, we're open for eight months, with events running from St David's Day in March to Halloween in October – we welcomed more than 40,000 people through the gates last year."

It was a sad turn of events, however, that led to the fruit farm becoming what it is today. The siblings lost both parents, Tom and Peta, who previously owned it, within a year of each other. Tricia, who oversees staffing and the shop, remembers the challenge of deciding what to do with their parents' livelihood. "Friends, accountants, lawyers – everyone – told us not to be sentimental about it and to sell up. It was very small scale and unprofitable – we thought 'pick your own' had had its day. But although our careers and lives had developed away from south

THIS PAGE Set in the Welsh countryside, Hendrewennol is a beautiful place to pick punnets of fresh berries. The Keen family – Toby, Gerald, Charles and Tricia – run it with the help of Richard Arnold (far left) and Scott Lewis (second right)



THIS PAGE

The farm also produces PYO vegetables, including runner beans and tomatoes, along with homemade jams and fresh fruit vinegars to buy in the shop, while ice creams and smoothies are available in the café

Wales, we all loved the farm and it was our family hub. We realised very quickly that we wanted to keep it, and to do that we would need to diversify."

From its earliest days, 11-acre Hendrewennol, which is Welsh for 'home of the swallows' (the birds flit around from May to September), was a pioneer in PYO. Tom and Peta Keen bought the house and land in the 1960s and growing soft fruit began as Peta's hobby – she planted out three rows of strawberries to make a bit of extra income. But when Tom left the family steel firm in the mid-1970s, they decided to turn the hobby into a business. "My father had seen PYO fruit farms in the West Midlands but no one was doing it in south Wales, which is traditionally dairy and arable. It was a big learning curve and local farmers thought they were crazy," Charles says.

Richard Arnold first worked on the farm as an 18-year-old, between 1985-88, and has been involved with Hendrewennol on and off ever since. Having built his own career in fruit marketing and processing, he now also maintains the farm's popular Facebook page, posting pithy responses to visitors' frequent enquiries about what is ready to harvest. "When I first started here, customers would pick four or five baskets of fruit each," he recalls. "Now, they fill a couple of punnets and want activities for the children."

Charles knew that, for Hendrewennol to survive, it needed a big injection of energy, ideas and money to make it viable again. "Fruit picking alone was no longer enough to draw in customers," he explains. The business's location is ideal: around 66 per cent of people in Wales live in the M4 corridor

between Newport and Swansea, so are within an hour of the farm, and both Cardiff and Swansea are growth cities with large numbers of young families.

After a New Year's discussion in 2012, momentum gathered pace and the siblings started developing the fruit garden while continuing with their day jobs. Charles and Gerald drew up a five-year plan for the business and negotiated a bank loan to help build the Fruit Barn café-cum-farm shop, cloakrooms and tractor sheds. They also applied for a £40,000 grant from Creative Rural Communities, a regeneration initiative part-funded by the Welsh Government. "We've become their best-performing applicant," Charles says, with a hint of surprise.

Together, the Keen brothers learned about the latest ways to farm soft fruit, and how to create a 'destination' day out, establishing links with PYO farms in Sussex and Oxfordshire, and forging relationships with growers in Scotland to learn about the technical issues. With Scott Lewis, Hendrewennol's farm manager and mainstay, at the helm, the family undertook a mass replanting and introduced an irrigation system to ensure a heavy crop.

The family furnished the Fruit Barn in an informal style with wood cladding, big sofas and recycled wood tables and shelves. It is also home to the farm shop, which today is stocked with local products and own-brand produce, such as luxury white and milk chocolate bars and granola sweetened with dried Hendrewennol fruits, elegant bottles of Hendrewennol strawberry and raspberry vinegars brewed



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RURAL BUSINESS

by Tricia, honey from the Fruit Garden's ten hives and an array of cordials, jams and chutneys made to Keen family recipes and using produce grown on the farm.

Toby, Gerald and Richard also mastermind the special events, which have been crucial in raising Hendrewennol's profile. Chief among them are Open Farm Sunday in early June and a special weekend Strawberry Festival later that month. Last summer, more than 4,000 people came, lured by the beer tent, wood-fired pizzas and bowls of strawberries and cream.

The Keens are delighted with how things have gone so far, and feel their parents would heartily approve. It's a place they clearly love and are happy to share. As Tricia puts it, "One of the joys of running the Fruit Garden is to see families having happy times, each person leaving with a smile on their face."

1 *Hendrewennol Fruit Garden, Bonvilston, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan (01446 781670; hendrewennol.com).*

FOUR MORE PICK-YOUR-OWNS WITH A DIFFERENCE

SHARNFOLD FARM & SHOP

Stone Cross, Eastbourne, East Sussex (01323 768490; sharnfoldfarm.co.uk). Offers local high-quality food and fun ideas for the family, with a trail, a play area and scheduled events in the summer holidays.

MILLETS FARM CENTRE

Frilford, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (01865 391555; milletsfarmcentre.com). Shop, restaurants, garden centre, falconry centre, crafts and play area.

TULLEYS FARM

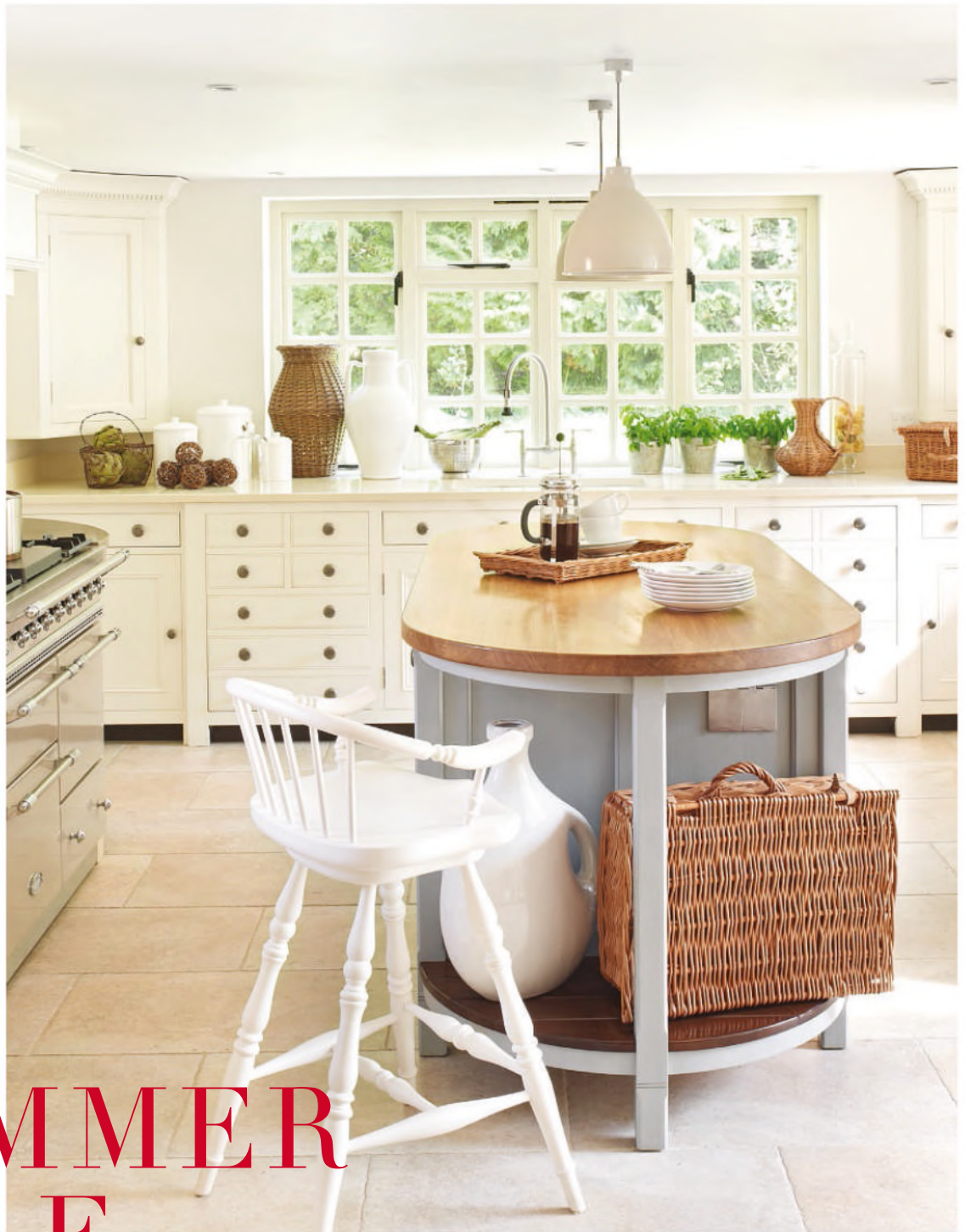
Turners Hill, Crawley, West Sussex (01342 715365; tulleysfarm.com). Farm shop,

tea room, play area, maize maze and animal corner. PYO includes sunflowers in August.

ALDER CARR FARM

Creting St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk (01449 720820; aldercarrfarm.co.uk) Farm shop, deli, barn café, craft shop, play area, farm animals and nature trail.





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A photograph of a traditional domed straw skep beehive. The skep is woven from light-colored straw and has a conical shape. It is placed inside a recessed opening in a rustic stone wall. The wall is made of irregular, greyish-brown stones. Green foliage is visible at the top and bottom of the frame, partially obscuring the wall and skep. The lighting is bright, casting shadows on the stones.

SPIRIT *of* THE BEEHIVE

The rare craft of skepmaking – creating traditional, domed straw hives – enables bees to produce a golden honey with a flavour like no other. Just one reason why devotee Diana Robertson is helping to keep this ancient skill alive

WORDS BY KATE LANGRISH
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CRISTIAN BARNETT



With a list of equipment that includes a turkey leg bone, cow horn and sheaves of straw, you'd be forgiven for thinking that Diana Robertson is about to commit an act of sorcery. In fact, these are the key tools of her craft – skepmaking – which is a truly spellbinding discipline.

Skeps are the traditional straw beehives you see in grainy black-and-white photos of rural days gone by. Their beautiful, domed, woven shapes are inextricably linked with the countryside and beekeeping, but are now used far less than modern designs. However, Diana is a firm believer in their practicality and weaves them by hand in her farm cottage in Somerset. Today, she is working on a table outside her house in the shade, having soaked the straw in a feed trough for 30 minutes. “The first step is making a ‘knot’ with 25 stalks of straw coiled round on themselves and secured with six stitches of lapping cane,” she explains, as she concentrates on keeping a firm grip. “It’s the hardest part, as you need to ensure it’s really tight or the bees will get through the gaps – I always feel as if I need three hands!” she says. “The final test of a good skep is to stand on it – it should be strong enough to hold your weight. Judges still do this at local honey shows.”

Diana became interested in the art of making skeps 17 years ago. “After I began keeping bees, I realised I needed something in which to catch swarms. I’d heard about skeps but couldn’t find one for sale, ➔

THIS PAGE Diana’s deft hands make the process look easy: she threads on a section of cow horn to act as a guide and ensure the

coil stays uniform and tight, and then uses a hollow, chamfered turkey bone to prize apart the straw before binding



so I bought a book by the great skeppist Fred Alston and taught myself. My first effort was a very strange shape but I gradually got better."

There was once a skeppist in every village. Beekeepers would select a few strong colonies to keep over winter, but plunder the honey from those remaining – which usually meant destroying the bees. In 1852, the American Lorenzo Langstroth achieved a breakthrough in beekeeping when he invented a moveable frame hive. This made it simpler to extract the honey. Its ease of use, and the fact it was possible to inspect the bees for signs of disease and swarming, meant this type of hive soon took over from traditional skeps.

At first, Diana used hers to collect swarms, before placing them in National hives, of which she has around six at this time of year in her orchard, now laden with fruit – medlars, apples, quinces, plums and damsons – pollinated by her bees earlier in the year. "The bees would do really well in the skep but then became weaker when I transferred them," she says. And these traditional designs do not need to be destroyed for a honey harvest – instead, Diana places an empty skep over the occupied one to 'rehive' them. Last year, she even successfully over-wintered some bees inside a skep. "I made a hackle, which is a straw thatch roof that sits on top of the structure like a pointy hat. It stops the rain and wind getting in. I was worried they would be cold, but when I checked, they were warm and dry."

It is unclear exactly why, but the bees, it seems, love their traditional dwellings. Perhaps it's the wonderful rounded shape that mimics their natural home of tree hollows. Or maybe it's the fact they can build loops of natural comb – some in perfectly straight lines across the 40cm-diameter of the skep, others incorporating twists and kinks. "I suspect it's because you interfere less with them," Diana says. "By turning a skep upside down and gently moving the comb to one side, you can still check for and treat disease and see if the queen is laying eggs, but you can't carry out the thorough




THIS PAGE The bees in Diana's skeps are still inspected regularly but are disturbed less than they would be in a modern hive – she is convinced that this is why the insects love the traditional dwellings. It takes Diana anything from three days to a week to make one



inspection that you would on a National hive, as there are no frames to take out. But this also means you can't disturb the bees as much, and I think that's what they like most of all. Every time you open up a hive, you set it back a little." Such is Diana's faith in skeps that she's even had a bee bole – a wall with a recess in which to place one, as found in the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall – built in the apiary, which provides good protection from the weather.

It takes Diana anything from three days to a week to make a skep, depending on the size. "It's a hobby rather than a business. I do make some for friends but mostly just what I need. Even then, I sometimes can't keep up with the bees! Last summer, I ran out of mini skeps, which the bees kept filling, so in the end I just put an upturned glass jar on top and they packed that with comb and

A photograph of an elderly woman with short grey hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt and grey trousers, sitting on a wooden chair outdoors. She is focused on weaving a small, round, light-colored basket using thin, dry reeds. She is positioned in front of a red brick house with a dark tiled roof and a green door. To her left is a large, tall bundle of harvested wheat stalks. In front of her is a wooden workbench with more reeds and a green bucket. To her right is a large green bush with pink flowers. The scene is set in a garden or courtyard area with a paved ground.

honey, too. All I needed to do was put the lid on and pop it in the larder!" Diana gives demonstrations at shows, such as the Royal Bath & West, and runs a workshop for her local bee division once a year, which are both popular, but she has another trick for spreading the word about skeps: bewitching the tastebuds. "I think honey has a better flavour straight out of the skep. In the old days, you'd buy these little ones full of honey at markets for a shilling each," says Diana, who has taken them along to a local church strawberry tea. "I had to explain that you eat the comb, too, which contains all the bees' goodness, including pollen grains and natural enzymes. When they spread it on their scones with thick clotted cream, they all loved it." She's right; the liquid gold that gently oozes onto hot toast is like nothing you can buy in the shops. The taste of skep honey is, quite simply, magical.

THIS PAGE

Skepmaking needs straw from wheat with longer stalks, so Diana uses an old variety called Maris Widgeon, which she buys from a local thatcher. Skeps were traditionally bound with brambles but she uses lapping cane

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Country Living is delighted to offer two different pavilions again this year, both celebrating rural crafts. Overlooking the cross-country course by the Land Rover Arch, the CL Makers' Marquee highlights our support for start-up businesses with an array of new craftspeople exhibiting there. At the top of the showground, the CL Pavilion on Avenue A showcases more than 40 hand-picked exhibitors offering the best in British art, craft and design. Visit burghley-horse.co.uk for more details.



ENTER THE COUNTRY LIVING DOG & OWNER LOOKALIKE COMPETITION

This event, sponsored by natural pet food producers Laughing Dog, is a popular fixture at the show.

It will be held at 12pm on Saturday 5 September outside the CL Pavilion on Avenue A. Pick up a form at the CL or Laughing Dog stand. There is also a 'cutest puppy' category, and both winners will receive great prizes. For details, come to the CL stand or visit laughingdogfood.com.




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Saturday 5 Sept	£10	£26	£12	£28
Sunday 6 Sept	£10	£14	£12	£15
Season entry (four days)	£30	£53	-	-

Prices are per person and apply to visitors aged 13 years and above. Children aged 12 years and under (accompanied by an adult) are admitted free of charge. Booking fee and postage apply. *Offer closes at 5.30pm Friday 14 August 2015.

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OUT & ABOUT

Five miles from York, Breezy Knees garden and nursery specialises in hardy perennials suitable for northern plots. Extensive borders form the heart of the 14-acre garden and these are complemented by seasonal highlights in a series of differently themed areas, including Pond, Shade, Rock and Cottage. The schemes are quite regimented and everything is clearly labelled, which isn't to everyone's taste, but is useful if you're on a plant-finding expedition (breezyknees.co.uk).



FRAGRANT ADDITION

Dregea sinensis 'Wattakaka' is a beautiful deciduous climber for the warmest spot in your garden. In high summer, its hanging panicles of delicate pink and white flowers emerge from among heart-shaped leaves and exude a delicious scent, so plant it where you can appreciate the fragrance. It's a twiner and will need supports and, in cooler areas, it is best grown in a pot and overwintered undercover. A jumbo plug plant costs £12.99 from thompson-morgan.com.

garden notes



Everything you need to know to get the most from your plot in August

WORDS BY STEPHANIE DONALDSON

THIS MONTH...

If there was one thing I could change about my garden, it would be to get more evening sun. I live on the side of a steep valley with a wooded slope above, so, even in high summer, the sun has dipped behind the trees by six o'clock and lingering outside must be saved for the warmest of nights. Initially I thought I had made a mistake when I moved here, but it didn't take long to realise that evenings in the shade are a small price to pay for shelter from the prevailing south-westerly winds that wreak havoc in plots on the other side

of the valley. Besides which, the garden is filled with light from sunrise, encouraging me to get outside while it is still cool. I've come to understand that it's rare to find a plot with perfect orientation and there will always be a mix of advantages and disadvantages. It is just a matter of adapting to the conditions, like the plants. One of the most inspiring gardens I have ever visited was in a disused north-facing quarry – it seemed such an unpromising site, but by understanding the possibilities and limitations, the gardener had fashioned a magical woodland area. Find out what is happening in my plot at theenduringgardener.com – and, to read about true challenges, I can recommend the blog at croftgarden.wordpress.com.

WHAT TO DO

In the greenhouse

Pinch out shoots on tomato plants to direct energy to fruit.

Liquid-feed greenhouse crops weekly.

Thin out bunches of indoor grapes.

In the garden

Summer-prune apples and pears.

Move containers into the shade before going on holiday.

Sow wallflower seeds.

Cut back leggy violas and pansies, and top dress with compost to encourage new growth.

On the allotment

Sow spinach for autumn picking.

If potato blight strikes, remove all foliage from infected plants and wait two weeks before harvesting. ➔





TOP OF THE CROPS

If you are partial to rhubarb, look out for this interesting new variety. 'Livingstone' isn't as dormant in winter, so it can be cropped early in the year (as long as it is warm enough to grow). There are two ways to harvest – all year round by picking stems selectively and leaving some to develop and die back, or in May and June, and again from September to November. It also has excellent flavour, crops well and is disease resistant. Buy one plant for £8.25 or three for £16.50 from pomonafruits.co.uk.

Order, order

This elegant echinacea-inspired plant hook is just the thing if you need somewhere to hang your hand tools while working in the garden.

Finished in antique brass, it will also add a decorative flourish to your outside space.

Available for £4.99 from crocus.co.uk.



PICK OF THE SHRUBS

Lavatera x clementii 'Barnsley'

WHY? If you want to fill a space with a fast-growing shrub that flowers over a long period, this soft-hued tree mallow fits the bill. It can increase in size rapidly, so is not ideal for a small garden.

WHERE? It performs best in full sun and will do well in light sandy or alkaline soil. Although fully hardy, in cold or exposed areas it will look its best sited against a warm wall. Cut back to 30cm from the ground in spring to prevent it getting straggly.

BEWARE It can revert to the less attractive blanchmange-pink shade of its parent plant – in which case, any affected shoots should be removed.



Lavatera x clementii
'Barnsley'

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY. ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARIANA IO

BUY WISELY

Alfresco lights

BUDGET Sarah Raven's Wax Tealight Holder Globes (pictured below, from £14.95) give a table a wonderful warm glow. They can be used with real tealights – a battery-operated version is also available (£19.95 for nine, sarahraven.com).

AFFORDABLE The battery-powered Lacy Lampshade has a shade made from coated plastic with a rope 'flex' and metal fastener for hanging it from a tree or gazebo (£25, coxandcox.co.uk).

INVESTMENT The Aluminium Candelabra is perfect for a romantic outdoor meal on a still summer night (£99, worm.co.uk).



Tip: sow parsley this month and it will germinate rapidly and supply a healthy harvest through winter

EVENT The RHS Hyde Hall Flower Show in Chelmsford, Essex, runs from 30 July to 2 August (rhs.org.uk).

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GARDENING

STYLE

Evergreen topiary garden

SEASONS OF INTEREST

Year round

SIZE

One acre

SOIL TYPE

Slightly alkaline clay

A lush garden scene featuring several large, fan-palm trees in the foreground. In the background, a white gazebo with a dark roof is nestled among dense green foliage and trees. The overall atmosphere is verdant and tropical.

EVERY SHADE OF GREEN

From bright, glossy emerald to deep, dark pine, the verdant hues of exotic-looking evergreens bring interest and sculptural beauty to this surprising Suffolk garden every day of the year

WORDS BY STEPHANIE DONALDSON ● PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD BLOOM

There's a touch of Narnia about Geoffrey and Christine Ingham's Suffolk garden. When you arrive in the village of Ousden, close to the Cambridgeshire border, all looks as it should, with thatched houses painted in limewash colours set among typical cottage gardens, bordered by fields. Turn down a track in the middle of the village, however, and you are soon in an entirely different world. True, Geoffrey and his wife do live in a 15th-century thatched cottage, but this is no cottage garden. It's probably best described as a very tidy jungle – with added topiary.

Sloping up from the house, the garden at Dip-on-the-Hill (so called because of its location) is a mass of contrasting textures and outlines in every shade of green, with just a splash of colour here and there. There are distinct layers of planting, while pines and other evergreen trees provide height and seclusion from the outside world. Beneath their canopies, multi-stemmed specimen trees (including a grove of *Phillyrea latifolia*), palms and towering bamboos emerge from an understorey of box and other neatly trimmed shrubs, with the

grass-like leaves of crocosmia, kniphofia and flax breaking up the smooth undulations of the topiary.

Despite the garden's exotic appearance, the majority of the plants are reliably hardy – and most could safely be described as tough as old boots. So much so that some will be familiar from supermarket car parks – spiky phormiums, colourful photinias, leathery leaved viburnums and glossy escallonias – but, when teamed with yellow-stemmed bamboos and punctuated by the fan-shaped palm leaves of *Trachycarpus wagnerianus*, all woven through with the topiary, they create a tapestry of planting that is greater than the sum of its parts. "It doesn't worry me that I've got common-or-garden plants," Geoffrey says. "They are the material I use to make the designs."

This is, it has to be said, quite a masculine garden, where control and a disciplined approach to varieties is paramount. Geoffrey admits that

Christine would like more colour, but that she is otherwise a happy collaborator. "I'm no plantsman," he admits,

THIS PAGE *Osmanthus burkwoodii* **OPPOSITE**
Tropical planting includes
Viburnum cinnamomifolium
(top right), *Chusquea gigantea* and
Phyllostachys vivax f.
aureocaulis bamboos
(middle row), and
Trachycarpus wagnerianus palms
(bottom middle)



HOW TO GROW BAMBOO

- Select a variety that won't outgrow the space or overwhelm its surroundings and always choose 'clump-forming' bamboos
- Install a barrier if it is a variety that spreads by sending out rhizomes underground
- Plant in well-prepared soil with plenty of added organic matter but do not enrich with fertiliser
- Leave the shed leaves to form a mulch – it will provide all the nutrition the plant needs





“but I am interested in growing things well. The limited plant selection is deliberate. I’m still attracted to certain plants but I’ve stopped succumbing – I just walk past them now.”

Some of this ‘walking past’ takes place at Architectural Plants in West Sussex, the nursery owned and run by his friend Angus White. Angus is the nurseryman who first introduced the nation’s gardeners to exotic-looking (but tough and easy) evergreen plants. It was his brochure’s description of the average British garden being “about as fascinating to look at in winter as a wet breeze block” that gave Geoffrey further encouragement to follow the evergreen path in such a wholehearted fashion. The result is a garden that looks interesting every day of the year. “Nevertheless, I suspect that Angus thinks I’ve sold out by adding touches of colour with the crocosmia and kniphofia,” he says, wryly.

This style of gardening relies largely on using the shape, texture and outline of mature or semi-mature specimens. Young plants may have their own ideas about how and where they will grow to maturity. As a result, Geoffrey has learnt a huge amount about successfully establishing specimens: “Large container ones continue to behave as if still in a pot for five to seven years after planting in the garden – it takes them a long time to put down deep roots. In dry weather, you need to water them often and they may still shed up to half of the previous year’s leaves before they start to sprout new foliage.”

There are numerous eye-catching vistas and views, but the undoubted stars of the garden are the *Trachycarpus* palms and the bamboos. *Trachycarpus wagnerianus* is a more wind-resistant and better-behaved relative of the more commonly grown *T. fortunei* with leaves that always remain stiff and upright. Here, with their hairy trunks and exuberant top knots, they stand like sentinels guarding the house. Further up the



garden, a bamboo grove of golden *Phyllostachys vivax* f. *aureocaulis* is an object lesson on placing plants to perfect effect. Against the dark leafy backdrop, the canes create a see-through screen of colour that separates the formal garden from the informal boundary planting. But be cautious before you add it to your ‘must-have’ list – this is a plant that can reach eight metres high if it is happy and has a reputation for spreading unless you confine its rhizomes within a bamboo-proof barrier.

The final essential element in Geoffrey’s creation is the light. “This is as important as the plants it illuminates,” he explains. “It creates the contrasts and intensifies some of the greens. Dusk from the top of the garden in midsummer is the best time of all.”

i Visitors welcome by appointment from July to September (£3.50 in aid of NGS). Call 01638 500329 or email gkil000@cam.ac.uk.

THIS PAGE,
CLOCKWISE FROM
TOP LEFT *Asplenium scolopendrium* or hart’s tongue fern; the sloping evergreen garden is a striking mix of clipped box, viburnums and phormiums, interspersed with *Maytenus boaria* trees and *Trachycarpus wagnerianus*; pretty unfurling *Matteuccia struthiopteris* or ostrich fern; shade planting with *Fatsia japonica*, ferns and bamboo

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Art & soul



The light, uncluttered rooms of Mariella Baldwin's charming home in Arundel provide the perfect backdrop for her treasured vintage finds and exquisite botanical paintings

WORDS AND STYLING BY MELANIE MOLESWORTH ● PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL WHITING

OPPOSITE Mariella
in her garden with
one of her prized
Silkie bantams
THIS PAGE A
still-life display
of flowers on the
mantelpiece brings
the pale sitting
room to life, their
colours and forms
complementing
the hues of an old
Welsh jug





Step inside Mariella Baldwin's Arundel home and you can feel the layers of history. Standing on the ancient high street, just below the medieval castle, it was a shop in Georgian times, and the large display window at the front gives it a welcoming air. At the core is a panelled sitting room dating back to 1475, while the kitchen is Victorian, and the light and lofty contemporary studio at the back was once the old stables. It may be at the centre of this pretty market town but it has the atmosphere of a country cottage, with every room full of flowers and foliage – both real and exquisitely detailed watercolour paintings. Mariella is a botanical artist and her first glimpse of the property was on a crisp January day five years ago when she began her search for somewhere she could run her painting classes. “I immediately felt a connection with the spirit of the house,” she says, and is now its most recent creative resident, arriving after tailors, artists, cooks, gardeners and writers.

Mariella was delighted to discover that the listed building had hardly been altered over the years: all the original fireplaces and panelling had remained intact and anything added had been carefully and sensitively chosen. The simple rooms decorated in calm colours, and the studio/workshop where she could teach and work, seemed a perfect fit. Her painterly eye is evident in every room: muted shades create a pleasing backdrop for her

paintings and collected treasures, and there seems to be a still-life ready to capture at every turn. Everything looks considered, from the placing of vintage china alongside propped-up family paintings through to the random mix of gathered flowers in vintage jars and vases dotted throughout the rooms. Collections of china and glass are a bohemian medley of old interesting pieces chosen for their shades and patterns, and gathered on travels over the years.

Most of the furniture was found locally, with Mariella relishing the search. “Nearby Ardingly market proved a fruitful source,” she recalls, “as well as Arundel’s array of antiques and junk shops such as French Loft, where I found my rosewood bed and vintage Provençal linens.”

With its eye-catching bright-red Aga, the kitchen sits at the back of the building, well away from the bustle of the high street. Although it serves as a thoroughfare from the garden to the house, it has become the hub of the home where Mariella cooks and entertains around the generous oak table, with a log fire burning in winter. Wherever possible, she has used natural and organic materials – the stylish grey Cornish slate flooring in the kitchen was hand-cut to order and simple rush matting rugs were chosen to complement the wooden floorboards. Fabrics are a charming mix of old and new cottons and linens. “I’m always on the lookout for unusual pieces – the rug in the small sitting room is an Argentinian horse blanket found at a polo match and the kitchen tablecloth is an Indigo-dyed vintage linen ➞

OPPOSITE Mariella's late father J M Hood was a talented amateur painter – his Dutch-inspired oil study sits to the left of her own still-life

THIS PAGE A bright-red Aga gives the slate-floored kitchen a modern edge – the cabbage tea towel is a favourite from Thornback & Peel





sheet," Mariella says. Lengths of extra-wide Belgian artist's canvas from the London art fabric supplier Russell & Chapple are on hand for covering tables and to hang as backdrops in the studio.

Steep wooden stairs lead up to the light uncluttered attic. The pretty old-fashioned bathroom overlooks the garden and the studio/spare room is above the high street. With its sloping roof, views over the town and empty frames waiting to be filled with paintings, it has the feel of a Parisian atelier.

The garden studio, where Mariella runs her weekly painting groups, is simply furnished with long glass-topped trestle tables – ideal for taping down sketches as well as showing plants in the best light for painting. For classes, Mariella fills an antique French picking basket, old jugs and vintage glass jars with huge bunches of greenery and flowers gathered from the garden. Tables are arranged to suit the number of pupils, so the studio has a relaxed, creative



OPPOSITE A vibrant indigo linen cloth from Parna lifts the earthy natural tones in the kitchen **THIS PAGE** The attic has a

stripped-back minimal look – Mariella painted the room white to make the most of the light and to emphasise the architectural features



atmosphere, and students are encouraged to wander outside and select and cut fresh specimens as needed.

The well-stocked walled garden has a classical urn as its centrepiece, the brick paving has been restored and re-pointed in keeping with its historical heritage, and the plastic guttering and downpipes replaced with authentic metal designs. Old English apple, cherry and pear trees have been joined by box hedges and white rosebay willowherb and a mixture of vegetables and scented herbs, while a pair of Silkie bantams have taken up residence – their eggs have appeared in many a painting. Just like the house, the plot was well-established but has flourished and taken on a fresh, new beauty under Mariella's care. 🌿

📍 To find out more about Mariella's work and painting courses, visit mariellabaldwin.com.

A long glass-topped trestle table provides the perfect place to study and paint flowers, and display greenery in a collection of vintage vases



OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Hand-thrown bowls by Fanny Peppercorn and earthenware teapots by A&J Young; a pretty vintage wirework rack hangs by the Aga; work in progress

THIS PAGE The studio was converted from the old stables – Mariella added the woodburner and striking contemporary lighting so it can be used throughout the year

SECRETS *of a* GLORIOUS GARDEN

Here, we follow the growing year in the beautiful gardens at Loseley Park in Surrey, with plenty of practical ideas for you to use in your own plot

WORDS BY STEPHANIE DONALDSON ● PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASON INGRAM



AUGUST: THE SHOW MUST GO ON

THE FLOWER GARDEN IS ZINGING WITH COLOUR as the annuals planted in May and June mature and join the show. There's little time for the gardeners to admire their work, though – to keep it looking this good, the borders need checking daily for any weeding, deadheading and staking to be done. It's this attention to detail that ensures every plant performs to best effect. In the rose garden, the central arbour's 'Albéric Barbier' is pruned once it has flowered, while in the vegetable garden, early crops are harvested and space cleared to sow next year's forget-me-nots before head gardener Burney goes off on holiday.

PLANT OF
THE MONTH
TAGETES
'STARFIRE
MIXED'

These compact marigolds flourish beneath the central mulberry tree in the flower garden, where informal drifts mingle in shades of pale lemon yellow, clear orange and russet reds, adding texture and contrast to the bedding scheme. In the hot-coloured borders, the eye-catching striped marigold 'Tall Scotch Prize' (which dates back to 1829) is tall enough to stand up to the competition from the perennials that are at their showiest best right now.

LOSELEY
PARK &
GARDENS

Standing in ancient parkland close to the North Downs, this Surrey estate has been home to the More-Molyneux family for more than 500 years. The two-and-a-half-acre walled garden has undergone an impressive renaissance over the past 20 years, spearheaded by the current owners Michael and Sarah More-Molyneux. As head gardener Richard Burnip (Burney) says: "We all have the same gardening problems – ours are just on a larger scale." 🍷



BURNEY'S TOP HOT-COLOUR PLANTS

Crocosmia 'Lucifer'

perennial grown from corms
(middle, second from right)

Dahlia 'David Howard'

tender perennial (above left)

Helianthus autumnale

perennial (top right)

Helianthus 'Monarch'

perennial (above right)

Kniphofia uvaria 'Nobilis'

perennial (top, second from left)

Ricinus communis

half-hardy annual (middle left)

Rudbeckia 'Rustic Dwarf'

perennial (left)

Tagetes 'Tall Scotch Prize'

half-hardy annual (middle,
second from left)

Tilthonia rotundiflora 'Torch'

half-hardy annual (top left)

Zinnia 'Aztec Sunset'

annual (middle right)



TECHNIQUE OF THE MONTH STAKING TALL PLANTS

Most of us think of staking as something we do early in the season, after which we just hope the plants won't outgrow their supports and leave the borders vulnerable to summer gales or heavy downpours. At Loseley they will intervene even when a plant is fully grown, as one toppled specimen in a border can take out or sprawl across its companions, spoiling the display. Before you start, cut away any stems that are beyond saving to make it easier to see what you are doing. Sturdy stakes are essential for mature plants.

SEASONAL TASKS AT LOSELEY

- Paths are hoed and raked to keep them clear of weeds
- Some perennials are cut back after they have finished flowering
- The strappy foliage of the red hot poker, *Kniphofia uvaria* 'Nobilis', is reduced by half so it doesn't detract from the striking flowers
- Deadheading on a regular basis is essential in order to encourage plants to continue flowering
- Taller varieties are supported with sticks or stakes, as necessary. Coppiced hazel is used for all types – the herringbone structure of its branches provides an ideal frame and the natural colour of the wood is unobtrusive
- Climbing roses are pruned



- Use a mallet to bang the first stake into position at one end of the border – once firmly in place, stakes should be approximately half the height of the plants to be secured
- Position the second stake at the other end of the border and bang into place
- Run string between the two stakes and tie it off securely
- Conceal the string by tying a stem or two of the supported plant in front of each stake

BURNEY'S TIP FOR AUGUST PLANNING AHEAD



Now is the time to sow biennials, including forget-me-nots and sweet rocket, so they will flower next year. Although these will self-seed naturally, in order to reproduce the large drifts of colour seen at Loseley in spring, it is necessary to sow direct into nursery beds and move the young plants to their flowering positions later in the autumn. ➡



THIS PAGE,
CLOCKWISE FROM
TOP LEFT Sunflower
 heads full of seeds are
 ideal bird food; dead-
 heading helianthus; a
 bold border; *Helenium*
'Moerheim Beauty'; a
 sea of *Tagetes 'Starfire*
Mixed'; fiery *Crocosmia*
'Lucifer'; glorious
Zinnia 'Aztec Sunset'



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WATCH PRACTICAL GARDENING
VIDEOS FEATURING LOSELEY PARK
AT COUNTRYLIVING.CO.UK



THE COLOURFUL GARDEN

Walking through the walled garden at Loseley is always a pleasure, and offers an opportunity to look at the use of colour and find inspiration for your own plot. In the Jekyll borders – named after influential garden designer Gertrude Jekyll – the hot colours are grouped in the centre, loosely following her principles, gradually softening to greys and purples on one side and pale pinks and blues on the other. There's the sense of a journey through the colour wheel, as well as a few rebellions where plants have wandered out of their designated sections, or self-sown randomly. If the interloper looks good, it is left in place rather than edited out – happy accidents are an important part of any garden.

The flower garden is planted to be gloriously colourful, using vibrant hues punctuated by blues and purples. Perennials form the backbone, interplanted with drifts of annuals to create an atmosphere of dramatic exuberance. Every available space is packed with varieties of the hottest hues, ranging from low-growing sanvitalias to tall sunflowers. Around 4,000 annuals are used to provide a succession of colour over the summer, presenting visitors with

some interesting lessons to take away. For example, the brain is incredibly selective when we look at things – it decides what it wants us to focus on and will edit out the background. Ask anyone what the dominant colour is right now in Loseley's flower garden and there's a good chance that they will say yellow, when the reality is that it's green. This is the most valuable colour in the garden and provides the setting for every other tone. Without it, the strong shades would look too hectic and jumbled, but because green usually plays a supporting role, it doesn't attract our attention in the same way. So here the planting features plenty of grasses and foliage plants to create the perfect setting for their colourful companions. The same is true in the white garden, where green provides much of the structure, with pale shades of silver, grey, yellow and blue combining with white to beautifully impressionistic effect. 🇬🇧

📍 Loseley Park, Guildford, Surrey
(01483 304440; loseleypark.co.uk).
Gardens open from May to end of
September, Sunday-Thursdays
(including bank holidays).

Full of French FLAVOUR



In a hamlet in rural northern France, a rundown traditional Breton farmhouse has been transformed into a relaxed, rustic home and stylish B&B with plenty of Gallic charm

WORDS AND STYLING BY NAOMI JONES ● PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRENT DARBY





Belgians Anouck and Joris Delanghe had spent many happy holidays exploring Brittany's beautiful countryside and coastline. Over the years, the idea of settling there – and enjoying the region's wealth of fresh produce and fine cuisine – began to take shape. Determined to find a truly rural property, in 2005 they came across a Breton longère (a traditional farmhouse named after its rectangular shape) for sale in the heart of the southern agricultural area. "It was in a small hamlet, not too far from the coast, and surrounded by pine, oak, chestnut, apple and pear trees," Joris recalls. The majority of the land had been sold to neighbouring farmers, but the house still retained a decent-sized plot. "We saw immediately how it could become our dream home and an exciting new venture – a gastronomic B&B," Anouck adds. "It had only been for sale for one day but we decided to buy it there and then."

It took two years for the couple to make the transition permanently as the property needed some work and they had to sort out their business in Belgium. Thankfully, the building was structurally fine but the layout needed changing in order for it to work as guest accommodation: they added en-suite bathrooms and plenty of storage, such

as painted armoires, in the two end bedrooms as well as in the middle room, where Anouck and Joris sleep during the off season. "It's right at the centre of the house," Anouck says, "so it always feels wonderfully warm and has lovely views of the surrounding farmland." They also created a family suite downstairs by installing a shower room accessible from both a double room and a twin, and renovated a section of the house to use as private sleeping quarters when necessary.

Today, the dated interior they inherited has been given a fresh, uplifting feel with clever use of colour and texture. "The tired-looking wallpaper in the kitchen was stripped away and replaced with plain white tiles around the working areas," Anouck says. As a contrast, the freshly plastered walls elsewhere in the room were painted in a warm aubergine shade, which is also used on the fireplace wall of the sitting room. The shabby tiled flooring was ripped up and replaced with sleek slate tiles that offset pieces of rustic wooden furniture.

Upstairs, insulation was added to walls to minimise noise between the bedrooms as well as to keep them warm, with

THIS PAGE Glass doors between the kitchen and dining room flood the space with light **OPPOSITE** In the colourful kitchen, sardines wait to go on the barbecue, and be served to B&B guests with home-grown vegetables



The interior was
given a fresh,
uplifting feel with
clever use of colour
and texture





THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE The bedrooms are painted in soft blue and white shades with red accents, echoing the French tricolor, and decorated with an array of characterful pieces found at brocantes and local markets

sections covered in limewashed wooden planks for a coastal feel; other walls were simply painted in different hues to give each room its own character – blue, white and red, to echo the French tricolor. Sisal flooring introduces natural texture and interest, which is continued with soft woven throws.

Anouck has added to the rustic mood by improvising, recycling and sourcing characterful vintage pieces from local markets and brocantes. Pieces of second-hand furniture have been freshened up with a lick of paint and simple headboards made using curtain rods and offcuts of plain linen, for example, while old crates have been repurposed as bedside tables. The result is a relaxed but stylish space that feels instantly welcoming, whatever the season.

The couple are constantly making improvements to their home, and always have a list of jobs to do – planting a garden, creating a barbecue area, installing an outdoor pool and establishing a grapevine to make their own wine are now all ticked off – but they've never regretted the bold decision they took a decade ago. "We love what we do," Anouck says. "We may be working but the house makes us feel as though we are always on holiday."

i To stay at the B&B, visit lamaisonblancheauxvoletsbleus.com. Travel via ferry from the UK to St Malo (brittany-ferries.co.uk), then drive 90 minutes to Blézouan.





The calm,
stylish space
feels instantly
welcoming,
whatever the
season





SARAH RAVEN

is best known for her work as a gardener and author but she also studied medicine at the University of London and then worked as a junior doctor at Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton. Since her medical training, she has become interested in healthy eating and what it means to her cooking. Here, she focuses on exceptionally good foods that she believes should be included in our diet as much as possible – and how to eat them. Using information gathered from nutritionists, medical journals and research centres, and based on her own discoveries, Sarah has distilled that knowledge into a collection of 12 fruits and vegetables, from kale and blood oranges to tomatoes and beetroot.

Sarah Raven's SUPERFOODS



Every month, Sarah picks the healthiest fruit and vegetables to eat in season, with delicious recipes to make the most of their flavours and natural goodness

AUGUST: BEETROOT

WORDS, RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY SARAH RAVEN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN BUCKLEY
FOOD AND DRINK EDITOR ALISON WALKER



'Pronto'



'Bull's Blood'



'Boltardy'



'Chioggia'



'Burpee's
Golden',
'Chioggia'
and 'Boltardy'



'Burpee's Golden',
'Chioggia' and 'Boltardy'



Baby
'Cheltenham'



'Pronto' and
'Burpee's Golden'



'Pronto'



Beetroot is such an easy plant to grow. Whether you have a large vegetable garden or a few containers on a balcony, you can direct sow the seed and be eating the baby roots within weeks. I grow three varieties – a standard purple called 'Boltardy', an orange, 'Burpees Golden', and a stripy pink and white, 'Chioggia' (now often called 'Candystripe'). They taste much the same and are equally good for you, plus a mix of colours looks wonderful on a plate.

All beetroots are a good supply of calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, folic acid and vitamin C. But it is the natural dietary nitrate content found especially in the juice that has recently been discovered to have two powerful physiological effects, which is exciting the scientific world. Nitrate helps us to create nitric oxide, which dilates (widens) our blood vessels, reducing blood pressure and increasing blood flow and oxygen supply to muscles and the brain. The extra oxygen can be used to generate more energy, which is why sportsmen and women are so keen on beetroot. Team GB put its properties to good use in the 2012 London Olympic Games, when athletes were supplied with a small (70ml) shot of concentrated beetroot juice each day in the build-up to and for the duration of the event.

The nitrates in beetroot juice are undergoing clinical trials for the treatment of blood pressure. Most currently available hypertensive (high blood pressure) drugs work in just this way – dilating blood vessels and so decreasing the pressure within them. There are also trials underway with diabetics, those suffering from Alzheimer's and pregnant women, as well as with elderly people given regular oxygen supplies, in the hope they could derive enough benefit to assist their stamina. And, most exciting of all, does the increased blood flow to the brain improve exam performance? That's undergoing research, too.

To get the best out of beetroot, you need the juice, so don't boil it to death. Drink it as it is, roast the roots to concentrate the nitrates or try one of the recipes here.



ROAST BEETROOT, BALSAMIC AND CARAWAY SOUP

Preparation 15 minutes Cooking 1 hour 20 minutes Serves 6

A warming, tangy soup that's good served hot or cold. The earthy flavour of the beetroot marries well with the citrus taste of the orange and the horseradish's sharp heat.

FOR THE SOUP

1kg beetroot, peeled and quartered
300g carrots, peeled and thickly sliced
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
½ tbsp caraway seeds
200g shallots (about 8), peeled and halved if large
3 garlic cloves, skin on
4 sprigs dill or thyme
1 litre hot vegetable stock
juice of 1 orange

FOR THE HORSE RADISH YOGURT

6 tbsp natural yogurt
1 tbsp grated fresh horseradish
zest of 1 orange

- ① Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan oven) gas mark 4. Put the beetroot and carrots into a roasting pan and toss with the olive oil, vinegar and caraway seeds. Roast for 30 minutes.
- ② Add the shallots, garlic and two sprigs of dill or thyme, and cook for 30 minutes more until the vegetables are soft and the shallots golden.
- ③ Mix together the horseradish yogurt ingredients. Season.
- ④ Squeeze the sweet roasted garlic out of the skins. Put the garlic, along with the roasted vegetables, into a large pan, scraping all the seeds and reduced vinegar in, too.
- ⑤ Add the stock and bring just to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes to allow the flavours to infuse.
- ⑥ Pick the leaves off the remaining dill or thyme sprigs and add to the mix. Blitz with a stick blender. Add the orange juice and check for seasoning. Serve with a dollop of the horseradish yogurt and a sprig of dill. ➔



HADDOCK, BEETROOT AND LEEK BAKE

Preparation 30 minutes

Cooking 50 minutes Serves 4-6

Perfect comfort food that's also healthy: there's a smokiness from the haddock, a sweetness from the beetroot and rich tanginess from the cheese. To reduce the dairy content, make the béchamel sauce with almond milk and replace the butter with solid coconut oil. Feta is a good alternative to Cheddar.

400g beetroot
2 tbsp olive oil
100g leek, finely chopped
425ml milk or almond milk
275g smoked undyed haddock
50g butter or 1 tbsp coconut oil
1 tbsp flour
freshly grated nutmeg
1 tsp English mustard
100g mature Cheddar
800g fresh spinach or chard
Parmesan, grated

- 1 Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan oven) gas mark 4. Peel

and slice the beetroot into 3mm discs with a mandolin or sharp knife. Drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Roast in the oven for 25-30 minutes until the beetroot is soft and starting to curl at the edges.

- 2 Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a pan and gently fry the leek until soft.
- 3 Heat the milk in a saucepan and, when just beginning to bubble, add the smoked haddock. Remove from the heat and leave to stand in the hot milk for 5 minutes. Take the haddock out of the pan, put on a plate and remove the skin if necessary. Set the milk aside.
- 4 Melt the butter (or heat the oil) in a saucepan over a medium heat, then stir in the flour until combined. Stir in the poaching milk in a steady stream until it is all incorporated and simmer gently for 2 minutes to cook out the flavour of

the flour. Add a grating of nutmeg, the mustard and plenty of freshly ground black pepper. Stir in the Cheddar and leek. Mix until well combined and remove the pan from the heat.

- 5 Blanch the spinach and drain. Leave to cool slightly, then squeeze to remove as much water as possible. Roughly chop.
- 6 Put a layer of beetroot in the bottom of an ovenproof dish, spoon over some sauce, then add a layer of flaked haddock and spinach. Repeat these layers, finishing with a layer of sauce and a scattering of freshly grated Parmesan. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes until golden brown.

CRIMSON MARY

Preparation 5 minutes Serves 8

A super-healthy version of a classic Bloody Mary, using beetroot juice as the base, this is delicious with a salt-and-pepper rim and topped with freshly

grated horseradish (this can be kept ready-peeled in the freezer and grated from frozen with a microplane). Rub the juiced lime wedges around the rim of the glasses and then put the rim of the upside-down glass onto a saucer of cracked pepper and Maldon salt. You can, of course, add 200ml vodka (8 x 25ml shots) if you fancy.

1 litre beetroot juice
juice of 4 limes
1 tsp celery salt
1 tsp Tabasco (or according to taste)
freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce (or according to taste)
TO SERVE
fresh horseradish, grated (to taste)
lovage stalks (or celery sticks)

- 1 Mix the ingredients together with lots of ice in a large jug.
- 2 Pour into tumblers. Garnish with grated horseradish and serve with a lovage (or celery) stick stirrer. ➔



“Why don’t all cows eat grass?”

asked the curious little cow



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BEETROOT, PARSLEY AND GREEN MANGO SALAD

*Preparation 20 minutes,
plus standing Serves 4 as
a main or 6 as a side dish*

Parsley is an excellent detoxifying herb, which is anti-inflammatory, antiviral and a mild diuretic.

FOR THE DRESSING

4 tsp tamarind paste
½ tsp chilli powder (or
to taste)
zest and juice of 2 limes

FOR THE SALAD

2 green mangoes, peeled

125g raw beetroot, peeled
10g dry wakame* seaweed
1 large shallot, peeled and
thinly sliced
1 stick lemon grass, tough
outer leaves removed and
very thinly sliced
40g fresh coconut, peeled
into shavings with a
vegetable peeler and
lightly toasted
20g coriander leaves
20g parsley leaves

① In a jug, mix together
the dressing ingredients.
Season with salt and freshly
ground black pepper.

② Using a julienne peeler
(or a sharp knife), create
matchstick strips from the
green mango. In another
bowl, do the same with
the beetroot. To stop the
beetroot bleeding into
the delicate green mango,
keep them separate until
ready to serve.

③ To rehydrate the wakame,
add double the amount of
water to seaweed, but don't
drown it with too much
or it will lose its crunch.
Leave for 10 minutes.

④ Pour half the dressing
into the beetroot and half

into the mango. Mix to
coat thoroughly.

⑤ Put the shallot, lemon
grass, coconut and mango
in a large bowl. Add the
coriander and parsley
leaves, then finally the
beetroot, folding through
gently. Taste for seasoning
and crumble the wakame
over the top. 

① Sarah has written a number
of bestselling gardening and
cookery books, and runs a
range of courses from her home
at Perch Hill in East Sussex. Visit
sarahraven.com for details.



GET MORE ONLINE
VISIT COUNTRYLIVING.CO.UK
FOR SARAH'S BEETROOT
SODA BREAD RECIPE

Taste the summer

Savour the season and make the most of fresh and fruity flavours by choosing delicious Carte D'Or ice cream for your desserts

CARTE D'OR SUMMER SUNDAES

On warmer days, there's nothing more refreshing than a dish of seasonal fruit and ice cream. For a mouthwatering end to your meal, prepare a tasty dessert by layering fresh fruit and Carte D'Or ice cream in tall sundae glasses. Here, we used Carte D'Or Vanilla and Carte D'Or Gelateria Blueberry & Vanilla flavours. Place fresh fruit in the bottom of each glass and add strawberry sauce before spooning in a layer of Carte D'Or ice cream. Repeat the layers, finishing with a scoop of your favourite Carte D'Or flavour. Decorate with an extra drizzle of sauce and berries if you like.

Use vintage
glassware
for a pretty
teatime feel

For more information on the Carte D'Or collection, including the Classic and Gelateria ranges, visit cartedorscoop.co.uk.



SIMPLE DISHES *for* BUSY DAYS

Continuing her series showcasing easy but delicious recipes, Alison Walker creates a range of no-cook options that are perfect for alfresco summer meals

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NASSIMA ROTHACKER • STYLING BY WEI TANG • RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY ALISON WALKER



CHILLED CUCUMBER AND AVOCADO SOUP*Preparation 10 minutes Serves 6*

Serve this delicate, fragrant soup in chilled glasses along with prosciutto-wrapped breadsticks. If you prefer a punchier flavour, add the chilli or Tabasco.

1 whole cucumber
1 ripe avocado, halved,
de-stoned and flesh
scooped out, plus extra
for garnish
zest and juice ½ lemon
large handful ice cubes or
200ml cold water
250g full-fat plain yogurt
1 tbsp each freshly chopped

mint and tarragon
1 green chilli or few drops
green Tabasco (optional)
snipped chives, to garnish

- 1 Peel and chop the cucumber, setting aside a few diced pieces for garnish if you like. Do the same with the avocado, tossing the garnish

in a little lemon juice if using.

- 2 If serving immediately, use the ice cubes and blitz all of the ingredients in a blender with 1 tsp flaky sea salt and freshly ground white pepper until smooth. If preparing in

advance (2-4 hours), you can replace the ice cubes with 200ml water and chill until needed.

- 3 Garnish with diced cucumber and avocado, and a sprinkling of chives. ➔



...fast & fresh

SPANISH TAPAS WITH MARINATED CHICKPEAS

Preparation 10 minutes, plus marinating Serves 4

This is the perfect lunch or supper for a hot summer's day. Embellish the chickpeas with slices of manchego, plenty of thinly sliced cured meats such as Iberico ham or salami, a dish of Spanish olives and some stuffed peppers. A glass or two of chilled Fino sherry completes the meal admirably.

400g jar or tin of good-quality chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 small garlic clove, crushed
3 spring onions, finely chopped
¼ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp smoked paprika
large pinch cayenne pepper

1 tsp sherry vinegar
zest and juice 1 lemon
½ tbsp each of freshly chopped coriander, parsley and mint

1 Combine all of the ingredients along with a good pinch of flaky salt and leave to marinate for at least 10 minutes or, ideally, for up to an hour. Serve at room temperature as part of your tapas board.



SPELT TABBOULEH*Preparation 10 minutes**Serves 2*

By rights, tabbouleh should be made with bulghur wheat or couscous, but this spelt (available from merchant-gourmet.com) has a wonderfully nutty flavour and chewy texture that marries very well with the herby dressing. If you do feel like a little simple 'cooking', the saltiness of griddled halloumi makes a good accompaniment.

6 cherry tomatoes

½ red onion

250g packet ready-to-eat spelt

½ tbsp each freshly chopped parsley, mint and coriander

60ml extra-virgin olive oil

2 tbsp lemon juice

1 garlic clove

½ tsp ground coriander
crumbled feta or cooked sliced chicken, to serve

- 1 Halve the cherry tomatoes and finely slice the red onion. Put in a large bowl and add the spelt and herbs.
- 2 Whisk together the oil, lemon juice, garlic and ground coriander with a fork. Pour over the spelt and toss well to combine. Transfer to a serving platter and top with bite-sized pieces of feta or chicken. Serve with strips of crispy pitta if you like. 🍴



CEVICHE

*Preparation 10 minutes,
plus marinating Serves 2*

Always use ultra-fresh fish for this dish, and prepare and eat it on the day of purchase. The acid in the lime juice will 'cook' the flesh but don't leave it for too long as the texture can become 'woolly'.

250g scallops
juice 3 limes
½ red chilli, finely chopped
4 spring onions, finely sliced
on the diagonal
4 radishes, thinly sliced
½ tbsp finely chopped
mint and coriander
a sprinkling of salad
micro-leaves (optional)
extra-virgin olive oil,
for drizzling

- 1 Halve the scallops horizontally. Put the lime juice into a bowl with half the chilli. Gently stir in the scallops and 1 tsp flaky sea salt. Leave to stand for 10 minutes, ensuring the shellfish is completely covered with the juice.
- 2 Drain the scallops, reserving the juice. Arrange on two plates with the spring onions and radishes. Garnish with the reserved chilli, herbs and salad leaves. Drizzle with some of the reserved juice and a little olive oil. This is very good served with crunchy tortilla chips. 🍷





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SUMMER SPRING ROLLS

Preparation 25 minutes Makes 12

These spring rolls look pretty and colourful when you bite into them and have a wonderfully fresh, herby flavour.

1 nest rice vermicelli
1 tsp sesame oil
1 medium carrot
1 Little Gem lettuce
150g cooked tiger prawns
mint leaves
Thai basil leaves
12 rice-paper wrappers
FOR THE DIPPING SAUCE
75ml lime juice
2 tbsp palm sugar
1½ tbsp fish sauce
1 garlic clove, crushed
½ red chilli, finely chopped

- 1 In a small bowl, combine the dipping sauce ingredients. Set aside.
- 2 Put the vermicelli into a large bowl and cover with boiling water from the kettle. Leave to stand according to the packet instructions. Drain, then toss in the sesame oil. Set aside.
- 3 Next, prepare the fillings and set them in separate

bowls ready for assembling the spring rolls. You'll need to work speedily with the wrappers, so it is best to get everything ready first. Using a julienne peeler or small sharp knife, cut the carrot into thin strips. Set aside 12 of the smaller lettuce leaves. Halve the prawns along their length. Pick over the herbs: you will need 3-4 mint leaves and 1-2 basil leaves per roll.

- 4 Fill a large bowl with hand-hot water. Put a clean tea towel on the work surface. Working one roll at a time, dip one of the rice-paper wrappers into the water for a few seconds until soft and pliable. Don't overdo it, though, because if they get too soft they will tear and stick to themselves – they just need to be pliable. Lay the sheet on the tea towel.
- 5 Put 3-4 mint leaves and 1-2 basil leaves along one side

of the wrapper, leaving a border at the sides. Top with a couple of prawns, a lettuce leaf, a small handful of vermicelli and a few shreds of carrot. Roll one turn, then fold the sides inwards and tightly roll up the wrapper. Set aside and continue with the remaining wrappers and ingredients until they're used up. The rolls can be made up to 6 hours ahead and chilled, but remove from the fridge about 15 minutes before eating. Serve with the dipping sauce. 





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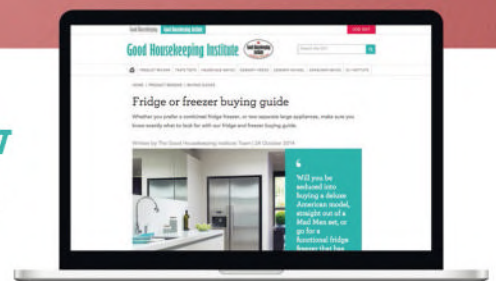


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Pedal POWER

As well as the obvious cardiovascular and toning benefits that cycling can bring, the combination of fresh air and beautiful scenery as you explore the great outdoors will boost your spirits, too

WORDS BY CATHERINE BUTLER

Cycling ticks a lot of boxes when it comes to general health and protecting against chronic illness and disease, and a study in Copenhagen found that those who regularly cycled or commuted by bicycle lived up to five years longer. "As with other forms of cardiovascular exercise, cycling helps control your weight, reduce blood pressure and cholesterol, and will help lower your risk of cardiovascular disease," says Maureen Talbot, senior cardiac nurse at the British Heart Foundation. There is also evidence that cycling can make you feel younger, too. Research from the National Forum for Coronary Heart Disease Prevention found that regular cyclists enjoy the same levels of fitness as someone ten years their junior. ➔

OIL THE JOINTS

Don't rule out cycling because of an existing injury or problem – it could be the solution to your aches and pains. "Cycling is low impact and one of the safest sports you can do," says sports physio and osteopath Tim Allardyce of Surrey Physio. "The position of the body in cycling was once thought bad for back problems, but there is now a lot of research to show that it can be very good for these issues. It's also great for improving mobility if you suffer from joint stiffness in your knees, hips or ankles, and is now even recommended for arthritis and after hip-replacement surgery."

HEALTHY MIND


"Being active can help us to combat stress and feel more positive, and cycling is a great way to incorporate physical activity into everyday life," says Elaine McNish, director of the British Heart Foundation National Centre. A study from the University of East Anglia shows that commuters who swapped driving for active commuting, such as cycling, experienced improved levels of mental wellbeing; while German research found the repetitive movements had a soothing effect. "Even five minutes of being in a natural environment and engaging in low to moderate activity improves mood," says Dr Valerie Gladwell of the University of Essex's Green Exercise study.

TONE UP

If you want to get fit and shift some pounds, cycling is one of the most efficient ways of meeting your goals, according to personal trainer Matt Roberts: "A beginner can still maintain the activity for a long period of time, therefore getting greater fitness and fat-loss benefits." Toning and strengthening isn't limited to your legs either. "It works all the muscles of the lower body," he says.

Don't feel you have to always set yourself a challenging route. "Even a small hill will make you pedal quicker and your blood pump faster," says Phil Insall, health director at sustainable transport charity Sustrans. "Prioritise the attractiveness of your route, and the health benefits will follow." ➡





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For more information please visit Bootshearingcare.com

PICK A BIKE

ROAD CYCLING

A smooth, consistent terrain makes this one of the easiest ways to cycle. Plan your route carefully by avoiding congested junctions and lanes with high hedges or obscured views.

THE BIKE The Pinnacle Dolomite Five Road Bike (£775, evanscycles.com) is designed for UK road conditions.

THE GEAR You don't have to wear neon to be seen with the Proviz Reflect360 gilet (£49.99; evanscycles.com) – the subtle pearl outer shell illuminates bright white under lights. **DO IT** Join the National Cycle Network at Ipswich, Suffolk, from where a leisurely route will take you along quiet roads and traffic-free trails to the town of Woodbridge (sustrans.org.uk).

GREEN LANES

Swap car horns and engines for nature's soundtrack as you ride along the UK's extensive network of unpaved country roads, bridle paths and cycle trails.

THE BIKE The Pinnacle Californium One 2015 Women's Hybrid Bike (£330, pinnacle-bikes.co.uk) is a lightweight model perfect for beginners.

THE GEAR The Michaux basket bag in Liberty London floral print (£115, michauxclub.com) fits inside a basket and has adjustable straps to convert to a shoulder bag.

DO IT Lanhydrock Country Estate in Cornwall offers six miles of superb off-road cycle trails and on-site bike hire (nationaltrust.org.uk/lanhydrock).

TANDEM

Riding tandem takes some practice, so hire before you buy.

THE BIKE The Orbit Velocity Tour Tandem 700c (£2,600, tandems.co.uk) is ideal for touring and day rides.

THE GEAR The Selle Italia Diva Gel Flow Saddle (£79.99, wiggles.co.uk) has a built-in shock absorber for a more comfortable ride.


DO IT Tandem Experience offers self-guided tours in north Shropshire (from £30 per person per day, tandeming.co.uk).

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Covering steep inclines and rougher terrain, this is one of the more challenging but most exhilarating ways to cycle.

THE BIKE The Norco Charger 7.2 2015 Mountain Bike (£675, evanscycles.com) is a trail-ready design to help push your limits.

THE GEAR Women's Super Fine Merino 150 leggings (£50, rohan.co.uk) are warm on a blustery mountainside, but not hot when working up a sweat.

DO IT Northumberland's Kielder Forest offers four of the best off-road trails through England's largest woodland (visitkielder.com). 

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Fortunately, the latest sunscreen formulations harness the soothing power of plants. Jurlique Sun Specialist SPF40 High Protection Cream (£27, jurlique.co.uk) has a high UVA and UVB rating, and contains calming camomile and calendula. Edelweiss and camellia oil in Sisley Super Soin Solaire Milky Body Mist Sun Care SPF30 (£83, sisley-paris.com) make skin less susceptible to irritation, while Green People Scent-free Sun Lotion SPF25 (£9.95, greenpeople.co.uk) contains beeswax to make it water-repellent without blocking sweat glands – perfect for those prone to prickly heat.



TREAT YOURSELF

The healing qualities of grapes have been utilised for many years – at The Vineyard Hotel's spa in Berkshire you can enjoy their benefits to the full. The Vineyard Red Grape Pampering Body Wrap (£70, 55 minutes) uses antioxidant-rich red grapes with natural algae to help protect and nourish. After body-brushing, a soothing mask is smoothed onto your skin, then left to soak in. Finally, a firming red-grape cream is massaged in. Complete the indulgent effect with dinner at the restaurant with wine pairings chosen from the 30,000 bottles in the wine cellar.

Stockcross, Newbury, Berkshire (the-vineyard.co.uk).

CL readers can enjoy a five-course dinner, B&B in a luxury double room with a 55-minute treatment from £240pp.*

health notes



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NATURE'S MEDICINE CABINET

Sour cherries The dark, sweet varieties in plentiful supply at this time of year may taste delicious, but it's their sour-tasting cousins that hold the most health benefits. These, such as the bright red Montmorency, are rich in antioxidants and are thought to have an anti-inflammatory effect on the body. One study showed drinking tart cherry juice reduced post-exercise pain in athletes. They are also one of the few fruits to contain significant quantities of melatonin, which may help to improve sleep. But there's good news for sweet-cherry lovers, too – they are packed with vitamin C and have been found to lower levels of urates in the blood, reducing the risk of gout. Eat them fresh or in a pie – cherries maintain much of their health-boosting chemicals when cooked.**

FOR A LIGHT, REFRESHING GREEN TEA, try Tombo Sakura Kukicha with Cherry Blossom tea (£5.20, tombotea.com), which is packed with antioxidants.

HELP IMPROVE YOUR GAIT

and reduce tired leg muscles on walks with Hi-Tec V-Lite Walk.Lite Witton walking shoe (£75, hi-tec.com), which has a sole that supports the natural roll of the foot. For every pair bought, £1 goes to the National Trust.

WOMEN WHO HAVE

EXPERIENCED or are living with cancer can now seek a restorative escape at Lifehouse Spa & Hotel in Essex, which has been certified by the charity Wellness for Cancer. Therapists have been trained by NHS Christie Trust to adapt traditional spa treatments to suit cancer patients' needs (lifehouse.co.uk).

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PAINTED DRESSER

This traditional Welsh dresser would make a stylish statement in a kitchen or dining room. Handmade from durable Canadian pine, it offers a versatile mix of enclosed storage and open display space with three large drawers and four small drawers, plus shelves above that include a groove for holding plates. A single large storage area with a half shelf runs along the width of the dresser behind the lower cupboard doors, which feature dovetail joints and aged-bronze hinges. The piece is available in a choice of finishes – painted, waxed, stained, distressed or a customised combination. It is fitted with round wooden knobs as standard, but other versions are available as an extra. Measurements: W122.3cm x H204.7cm x D43cm. Large drawers: W31cm x D32.4cm x H11.2cm. Cupboard space: W114cm x H24cm x D30.5cm. **CL price £973.25** (usually £1,145) plus £29 p&p

PAINTED SINGLE-SEAT HALL STORAGE BENCH

This sturdy single-seat pine storage bench with a hinged seat is perfect for a hallway, offering an ideal place for keeping shoes, wellies, dog leads and umbrellas. It also makes a great telephone stand, as phone directories and takeaway menus can be hidden away inside. Measurements: W65cm x H90cm x D49cm. Seat: H50cm. Interior: W57cm x H38cm x D37cm. **CL price £157.25** (usually £185) plus £20 p&p

PAINTED OPEN WALL SHELF

This attractive country-style, painted-pine open wall shelf offers an elegant storage solution for any room in the house. The three generous shelves are ideal for holding a variety of items, from china to preserves, books or toiletries. The unit is supplied with four brackets for wall mounting. Measurements: H96.5cm x W89cm x D15cm. **CL price £199.75** (usually £235) plus £15 p&p

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Terms & conditions Prices are per person based on two sharing a twin room. Single rooms and optional insurance are available at a supplement. Subject to availability; terms and conditions apply. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Additional entrance costs may apply. Cruise duration dependent on selected itinerary. These holidays are operated by, and your resulting contract and booking conditions will be with, Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs DE14 1SP (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430), a company independent of Hearst Magazines UK. *Supplements are applicable for certain regional stations. **Calls from a BT landline will cost no more than 10p per minute; calls from mobiles and other networks may cost more.



RELAX AT OUR SPA EVENT

Join us at Ragdale Hall for an exclusive two-night reader break



From 18-20 October (Sunday to Tuesday), enjoy a wonderful two-night break at this luxurious spa in Leicestershire, plus a special CL reader evening. Stay in a superior room for £369 per person or a standard for £333 per person. You will also each receive a free Decléor gift, worth £29.80.

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- FREE Decléor gift per person, worth £29.80, which includes Aromessence Neroli Oil Serum (1ml), Life Radiance Mask (15ml), Hydra Floral Light Cream (15ml) and Systeme Corps (50ml) in a Decléor pouch


- Full use of spa facilities, plus the thermal spa, all classes and gym
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- Elemis skincare workshop on the Sunday night (18 October)
- 15% off any additional Decléor treatments booked
- *Country Living* special reader evening on Monday 19 October
- Check out at 2pm

EXTEND YOUR VISIT

Why not book an extra night on Tuesday 20 October for just £169 per person? Price includes all meals, another 40-minute treatment from the choices (left), plus full use of the facilities.



TO BOOK

Visit traveledit.co.uk/countryliving and search CLRE15 or call 01664 433013 and quote CLRE15 to reserve a place on this exclusive discounted event. 

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British manufacturer SofaSofa's latest range contains over 60 different sofa styles, with something to suit every taste and budget. There is a huge range of fabrics from which to choose, including wools, velvets and leathers. All products are handmade in the UK and come with a no-quibble 21 day money back guarantee. What's more, SofaSofa deliver anywhere on the UK mainland, usually in less than four weeks. But the best news of all is that for the next few weeks you can save up to 25% off the entire range in their Summer Sale.

To view the entire range visit www.sofasofa.co.uk or call 01495 244226 to get your copy of the SofaSofa catalogue.

Home sweet home Love your space



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CARPET BAGS

Carpet Bags' beautiful range now includes this new Lindy tote bag. It is lined with black cotton twill and inside is a zip pocket as well as an inner open phone pocket. The adjustable leather straps and gold colour buckles add the finishing touches. This is the perfect bag for everyday items plus that little extra. To see the Lindy bag, and the other new styles and carpet designs being introduced this year, regularly visit www.carpetbags.co.uk. All these carpet bags are made in England.

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- Kitchenware from south-west county.
- Aqua-coloured garden furniture?
- Canine takeaways.
- Staircases with poise and elegance.

Send your answers on a postcard to: CPCNLP15333, Hearst Magazines UK, The Data Solutions Centre, Worksop S80 2RT.

The closing date for entries is 31st August 2015. NB: One entry per household. Not open to employees of Hearst Magazines UK (or their relatives).



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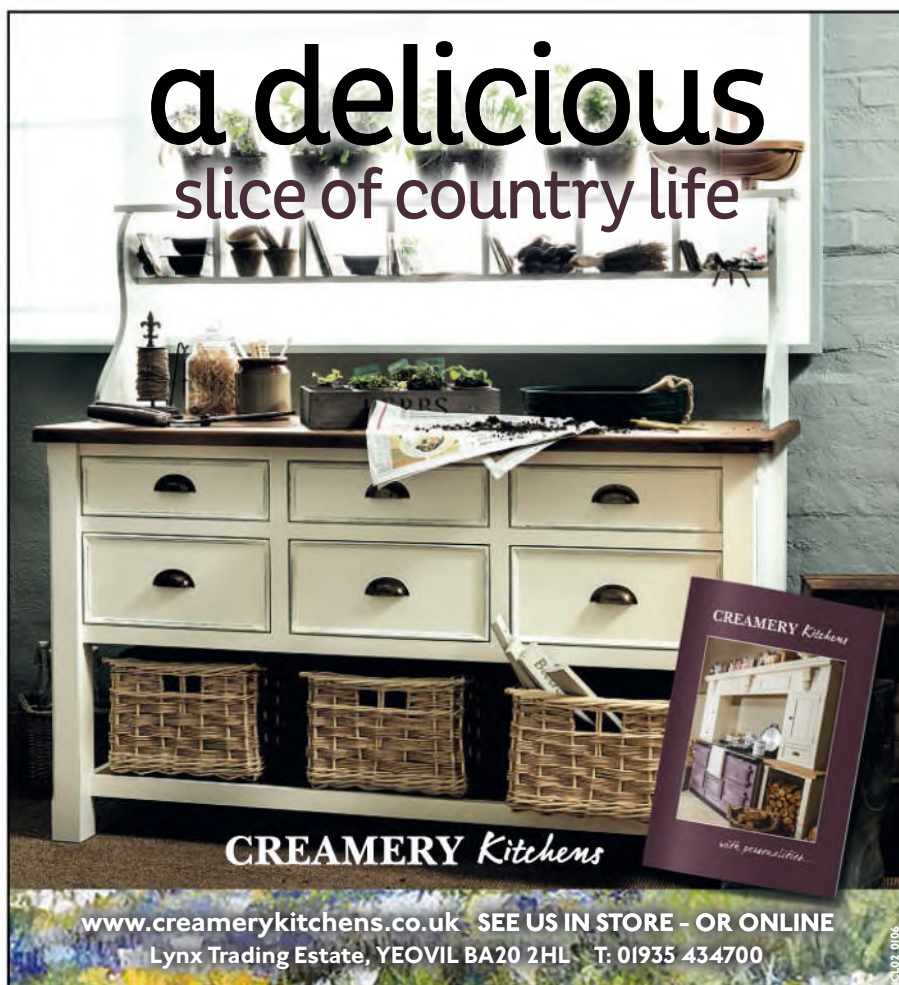
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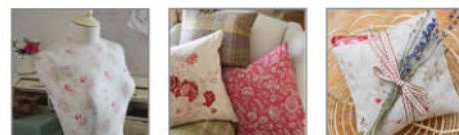
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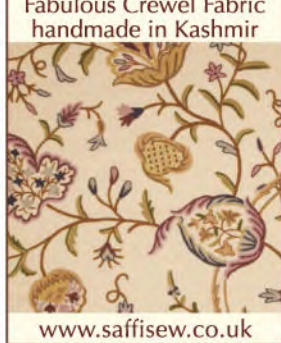
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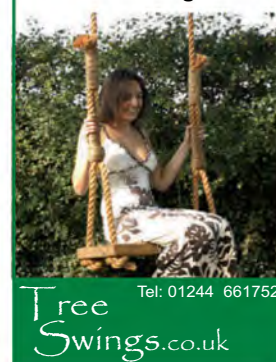
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CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT Bear loves the wilds of Wales, including St Tudwal's Island West, which he now owns, and the Brecon Beacons, where he trained before joining the SAS

MY COUNTRYSIDE BEAR GRYLLS

The adventurer enjoys the challenge of living off-grid on a small Welsh island

I grew up on the Isle of Wight and have very strong memories of learning to climb on the cliffs, and making rafts there with my father. He was the one who sparked my love of the outdoors. A former commando and climber, he passed on knowledge to me when I was very young – skills that have lasted me a lifetime.

My sons [Jesse, 11, Marmaduke, eight, and Huckleberry, six] love adventure and I like to encourage that. Whether it's climbing in Scotland, exploring caves in Wales or just making a camp in the garden at home, adventure is what you make it. They enter a competition every year for the RNLI, where they build their own raft and race it in Tor Bay in Devon – last year they made one out of their old bed. I love helping them do simple things that don't involve expensive electronics, and it's always good fun. At the moment they are a little too much into fighting each other – I am trying to redirect that energy back into making things and climbing places.

The UK is unique and the more I travel, the more I realise what a perfect mix of tranquil countryside and dramatic coastal and mountain terrain it offers. I've just finished filming a series for ITV called *Britain's Biggest Adventures* for which I explored some of the wildest parts. It really opened my eyes to the extraordinary beauty of our country as well as just how easy it still is to find yourself in regions of remote wilderness.

The area I most love is Wales. I'd always dreamed of owning a small island somewhere, since my childhood. So finding St Tudwal's Island West, off the coast of the Llyn Peninsula, was a dream come true.

It is without doubt my favourite place on earth. We have no mains electricity or water and run everything totally off-grid, which at times can be interesting – but I love the challenge! The island has so much to offer but, above all, it gives us a rare opportunity just to be together as a family without much communication with the outside world.

I'm very proud to be the youngest ever Chief Scout. When I was small, the scouts gave me a great sense of family and belonging as well as encouraging my thirst for adventure. My earliest memory of scouting is being given one match and a sausage and then told to work out how to cook it. I thought, 'It will never burn long enough to do that'. Then I realised you used the match to light the fire, and used the fire to cook the sausage.

I vividly remember going to the Brecon Beacons for the first time on my own to train before SAS selection started and being overawed by the scale of the peaks and the brutality of the winter weather. I thought, 'Man, this is going to be harder than I thought', and I was right. But it is a part of Britain that I love and know so well now.

I've had plenty of hairy moments in the UK –

everything from being trapped by the water in huge rapids to falling down crevasses.

The biggest fear for me as a father and husband is not being there for my family, and I've certainly had a few too many close calls over the years. They have all taught me that life is precious, and that you have to be smart because you only have to get it wrong once.

I've explored the remotest parts of Britain – it's easy to find areas of wilderness

For information about the Bear Grylls Survival Academy, go to beargryllssurvivalacademy.com.

INTERVIEW BY ANNA JURY. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY; GETTY; REX FEATURES



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